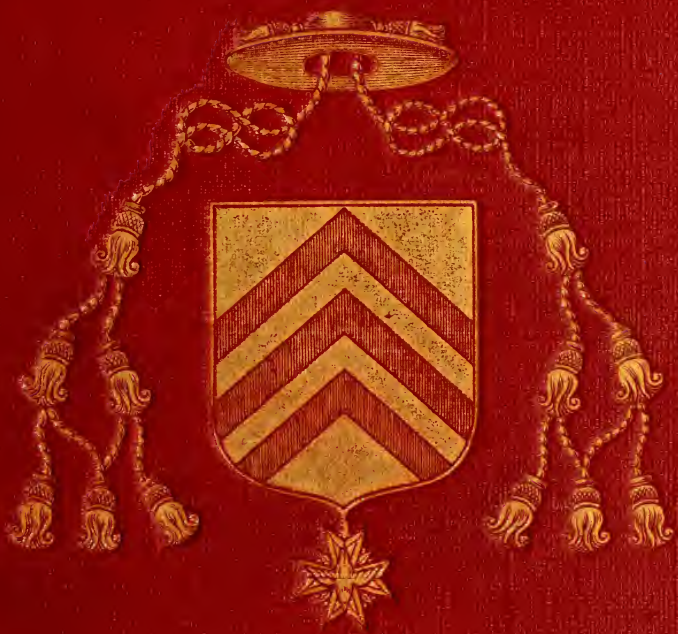
CARDINAL DE RICHELIEU



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CARDINAL DE RICHELIEU

CARDINAL DE RICHELIEU

TRIPLE PORTRAIT BY PHILIPPE DE CHAMPAGNE

CARDINAL DE RICHELIEU

BY

ELEANOR C. PRICE

AUTHOR OF "A PRINCESS OF THE OLD WORLD"

"Il est dans l'histoire de grandes et énigmatiques figures sur lesquelles le 'dernier mot' ne sera peut-être jamais dit. . . . Telle est, assurément, celle du Cardinal de Richelieu"

BARON A. DE MARICOURT.

WITH TWELVE ILLUSTRATIONS

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

"TEMERARIOUS indeed must he appear who attempts to comprehend in so small a space the admirable actions of a Hero who filled the whole earth with the fame of his glory, and who, by the wonders he worked in our own days, effaced the most lofty and astounding deeds of Pagan demigods and illustrious Personages of Antiquity. But what encourages me to attempt a thing so daring is the preciousness of the material with which I have to deal; being such that it needs neither the workman nor his art for the heightening of its value. So that, however little I may say of the incomparable and inimitable actions of the great Armand de Richelieu, I shall yet say much; knowing also that if I were to fill large volumes, I should still say very little."

Although the courtly language of the Sieur de la Colombière, Gentleman-in-Ordinary to Louis XIV., who wrote a *Portrait* of Cardinal de Richelieu some years after his death, may appear extravagant to modern minds, there is no denying that he is justified on one point—the marvellous interest of his subject.

Few harder tasks could be attempted than a complete biography of Richelieu. It would mean the history of France for more than fifty years, the history of Europe for more than twenty: even a fully equipped student

might hesitate before undertaking it. At the same time, Richelieu's personality and the times in which he lived are so rich in varied interest that even a passing glance at both may be found not unwelcome. If excuse is needed, there is that of Monsieur de la Colombière: "Pour peu que j'en parle, j'en dirai beaucoup."

There are many good authorities for the life of Cardinal de Richelieu and for the details of his time, among which the well-known and invaluable works of M. Avenel and of the Vicomte G. d'Avenel should especially be mentioned. But any modern writer on the subject must, first and foremost, acknowledge a deep obligation to M. Hanotaux, concerning whose unfinished *Histoire du Cardinal de Richelieu*, extending down to the year 1624, one can only express the hope that its gifted author may some day find leisure and inclination to complete it.

E. C. P.

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CARDINAL DE RICHELIEU

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PART I

EARLY YEARS

1585—1607

CHAPTER I

1585—1590

The birth of Armand Jean du Plessis de Richelieu—The position of his family—His great-uncles—His grandfather and grandmother—His father, François de Richelieu, Grand Provost of Henry III.—His mother and her family—His godfathers—The death of his father.

IN the year 1585, when Elizabeth of England was at the height of her power, when Mary of Scotland lay in prison within two years of her death, when Philip of Spain was beginning to dream of the Invincible Armada, when Henry of Guise and the League were triumphing in France, the future dominator of European politics was born.

Armand Jean du Plessis, third and youngest son of François du Plessis, Seigneur de Richelieu, was an infant of no great importance. Even his birthplace, for a long time, was not known with any certainty.

His family was noble, but not of the higher nobility which governed provinces, commanded armies, and glittered at Court. He belonged to that race of French country gentlemen which led a strenuous life in the sixteenth century, either for good or evil—perhaps mostly for evil. They were generally poor, proud, and greedy. If, by fair

means or foul, they could capture a rich wife of their own station, so much the better; if not, they readily sacrificed birth for money, and bestowed an old name, coat and sword, rough manners and ruinous walls, on some heiress of the *bourgeoisie*. When the resource of marriage failed, such a gentleman would turn himself into a mercenary soldier, Catholic or Huguenot, or creep into Court employment in the shadow of some great noble of his province; or failing such honest means, he might clap on a mask and take to highway robbery, rich travellers being better worth pillaging than the peasants who hid in their hovels as his horse's heavy hoofs clanked by. Sometimes Religion herself, or the false Duessa who personified her in those days, might help a needy gentleman to a livelihood. There was many an abbot who had never been a monk; and there were lucky families—that of Du Plessis, for instance—who possessed a bishopric as provision for a younger son.

The Du Plessis were an old family of Poitou. In that ancient and famous province they had held several fiefs so far back as the early thirteenth century; but they were a wandering, fighting race, without strong attachment, it seems, to their native soil. One of them is said to have gone to England in the suite of Guy de Lusignan, and to have married a noble English wife. Another journeyed to Cyprus with the same distinguished patron. In the Hundred Years War, two Du Plessis brothers were found fighting on opposite sides, French and English. Pierre, the elder, head of the less distinguished branch of the family, was a robber of Church property as well as a traitor to the national cause; but in the way of morals there was not much to choose between him and his brother Sauvage, the patriot, in favour of whom their father threatened to disinherit him.

Sauvage was a man of strong, acquisitive character, and everything prospered in his hands, though he began his career by carrying off a younger brother's wife. It was his son, Geoffroy, who laid the real foundation of future greatness by his marriage with Perrine Clérem-

bault, of a good old family, whose brother was Seigneur of Richelieu. Louis de Clérembault, who held a post in the Court of Charles VII, left his fortune and estates to François du Plessis, his sister's son. The young man not only succeeded to the fortified château of Richelieu and a good position in his native province, but also to a connexion with the Court which lasted into the reign of Louis XI, and which helped him to lift his family a step higher by marrying his own son, François, to the daughter of Guyon Le Roy, of Chavigny, in the Forest of Fontevrault, a distinguished courtier, and Vice-Admiral of France under François I. This François du Plessis de Richelieu was great-grandfather to the famous Cardinal.

An ecclesiastical turn—for the sake of gain rather than of godliness—was given to the family by its relationship with that "true prelate of the Renaissance," Jacques Le Roy, uncle of Madame de Richelieu. He was successively Abbot of Villeloing, Cluny, and St. Florent-de-Saumur, and Archbishop of Bourges, and in him the bad sixteenth-century alliance between the Church and the world, the consequence of royal nomination to benefices, might be seen at its most flourishing point.

He chose three out of his five Richelieu great-nephews to follow in his footsteps. Two of them rose to be abbot and bishop; the other, Antoine, took the vows as a monk at Saumur against his will, and after a short religious life varied by floggings and other punishments for rebellion, unfrocked himself and ran away to the wars. Known throughout his military life as "the Monk," he was a cruel and ferocious soldier. With his brother François, a man of very different type, he first saw service in the Italian campaigns under the Maréchal de Montluc. Both brothers returned to Poitou towards 1560, and both took the Catholic side in the religious civil war which raged for years in the miserable western provinces of France, where Protestantism, from various causes, had taken a firm hold. Attached to the Guise faction, the brothers became special partisans of the Duc de Montpensier, the King's lieutenant in Poitou and their own near neighbour at the Château de

Champigny. His army swept the province with fire and sword, and among his many fierce and adventurous followers François and Antoine du Plessis-Richelieu led the way.

The former, however, seems to have been an honest soldier rather than a bloodthirsty demon. He, nicknamed "*le Sage*," and regretted as "un fort brave gentilhomme," lost his life in an expedition against the English, who had occupied Le Havre. *Le Moine* survived his brother some years, and his fame as a fighter became worth a post at Court and a knightly order. With an ever-growing reputation for vice and violence, he was killed in a street brawl in Paris—"mort symbolisante à sa vie," says the chronicler l'Estoile. His most characteristic exploit, and the most startling among many, was the single-handed massacre of a hundred Huguenots who had taken refuge in a church near Poitiers. Antoine de Richelieu "amused himself" by shooting down these poor defenceless creatures in cold blood.

So much for the Cardinal's great-uncles. His grandfather, Louis du Plessis, Seigneur de Richelieu, the eldest of the family, died a young man, but not before he had helped on its fortunes by a marriage profitable in dignity, if not in coin. The heir of Richelieu was of a quieter spirit than his brothers. He entered the household of a fine old noble—Antoine de Rochechouart, seneschal of Toulouse, distinguished for valour in the reigns of Louis XII and François I—as lieutenant of his body-guard; and very shortly married his master's daughter, thus distantly connecting his famous grandson with one of the noblest old ducal families in France, from which sprang Madame de Montespan and her brilliant brothers and sisters, the Duc de Vivonne, Madame de Thianges, and the learned Abbess of Fontevrault. His Rochechouart grandmother was the one precious link between Cardinal de Richelieu and the higher nobility.

M. de Rochechouart was poor, probably extravagant, and his daughter Françoise, whom tradition makes neither young, pretty, nor amiable, seems to have lived in a sort

of dependence on the great Dame Anne de Polignac, dowager of La Rochefoucauld, at Verteuil, where Charles V was royally entertained in 1539. These circumstances may account for the *mésalliance* which Mademoiselle de Rochechouart certainly made in marrying Louis du Plessis. Her interest gained him the Court appointment of *échanson*, or chief butler, to Henry II. But he was neither clever nor prudent, and his widow was left with five young children, very little money, a sharp, proud temper, and a deep discontent with her lot in life.

She settled herself at Richelieu, then only a small castle on an island in the river Mable, in the heart of a country terribly disturbed by civil war, and commanded, from the neighbouring hills, by the strongholds of unfriendly neighbours. Here she brought up her children, of whom the second son, François, was the father of Cardinal de Richelieu.

The story goes that a tragic event made François lord of Richelieu. There was a feud, centuries old, between the Du Plessis in their moated castle and the family of Mausson, perched upon the hill. The quarrel had been in abeyance during the peaceable, absentee life of Louis du Plessis, but when his proud widow, with her haughty, passionate boys, took up her abode at Richelieu, it broke out again furiously. Louis, the eldest son, was just growing into manhood, an officer in the Duc de Montpensier's guards, when he fell out with the Sieur de Mausson over that ancient bone of contention, a seat in church.

Both families attended the village church of Braye, on the forest slope close by. In those days, and long afterwards, the chief gentleman in the parish had rights over the church quite as jealously guarded as any other of his feudal privileges. He sat with his family high up in the choir. He ordered the hour of mass, and the curé did not venture to begin before he arrived. The congregation followed his lead throughout. When he was absent, his servants sat in his place and insolently demanded the honours due to him. His coat of arms was hung up for

all to see. If he died, the bells chimed unceasingly for forty days, and the church was hung with black velvet for a year and a day.

It appears that the Sieur de Mausson and the young Seigneur de Richelieu both demanded honours which could not be paid to both. The young man, pushed on by his mother, made an angry resistance to the Mausson claims. His neighbour, by way of settling the question, lay in wait for Louis and murdered him.

Madame de Richelieu thought of nothing but revenge. Her younger son, François, was page to King Charles IX.: she sent for him, and he lived at Richelieu, mother and son with one object, one intention, till the watched-for time came. Then one day, when Mausson was fording the river, François and his men rushed out from the shadow of the willows. They had set a cunning trap for the enemy, a cart-wheel hidden under water, and while his restive horse was plunging, they fell upon him and killed him. So ended the feud between Mausson and Richelieu, still a lingering tradition in the valley of the Mable.

There was not much justice in those days, but it appears that François was obliged to fly the country. He wandered as far as Poland, where Henry of Anjou was playing at being King, and shared in the adventures of that most worthless of the Valois when he ran away with the Polish crown jewels and travelled round by Austria and Venice to succeed Charles IX on the throne of France.

François de Richelieu became Henry's trusted servant. Certainly there was nothing of the *mignon* about him. Very tall, thin, solemn and dismal, his looks were suitable to his dreary but necessary office—first Provost of the King's house, then Grand Provost of France, charged with arresting malefactors and presiding over their punishment. He was known at Court as "Tristan l'Hermite," so that he must have struck his contemporaries as resembling, not in his office alone, the famous Provost of Louis XI.

François de Richelieu was affianced in early youth, before the Mausson affair drove him abroad, to Suzanne de la Porte, who belonged by birth to the higher *bourgeoisie* of his native province. Circumstances brought about this marriage, to which one cannot imagine that the proud Françoise de Rochechouart gave a very willing consent.

The family of La Porte, highly respectable, and clever with all the Poitevin shrewdness, possessed estates in Poitou and elsewhere. François de la Porte, the Cardinal's maternal grandfather, was a brilliant scholar at the University of Poitiers, only second in fame to that of Paris, and first in Europe for the study of Roman law in the original spirit; keen, solid, logical, practical.

François de la Porte became a learned and distinguished advocate in the law-courts of Paris, but did not lose interest in his own province and his neighbours there. He appears to have been specially concerned with the affairs of Louis de Richelieu, who, according to Tallemant, was not only very poor, but "embrouilla furieusement sa maison," and left his family in real distress. M. de la Porte made himself very useful to Dame Françoise de Richelieu, no doubt partly as to the management of her more distant property, difficult enough in those desperate times, and satisfied the vanity with which his contemporaries credit him by marrying his daughter to her son. The exact date of the marriage does not seem to be known.

As Grand Provost, François de Richelieu had a house in Paris, in the Rue du Bouloy, and all probabilities point to the fact of his son Armand having been born there. He was certainly baptized in Paris, though not till eight months after his birth, the delay being caused partly by his extreme delicacy, partly by the long and dangerous journey from Poitou which had to be made by his grandmother, who was present at the church of Saint-Eustache as one of his sponsors.

The others were two Marshals of France, Armand de Gontaut-Biron and Jean d'Aumont; each of whom gave

the child a name. Both these gallant soldiers are celebrated by Voltaire in the *Henriade*:

> "D'Aumont, qui sous cinq Rois avoit porté les armes;
> Biron, dont le seul nom repandoit les alarmes. . . ."

Both were intimate friends of the Grand Provost, and joined him later in placing their swords at the command of Henry IV.

The name of François de Richelieu is frequently to be met with in the documents of Henry III.'s reign. He received the highest honour Royalty could bestow, the Order of the Holy Spirit. The King's personal safety depended largely on him, and allowing for the general corruption of the time, he seems to have performed his duties, often secret and mysterious, with honesty, loyalty, and courage. On that wild day in 1588, when the Duc de Guise had been welcomed by Paris with mad enthusiasm, when the streets were chained and barricaded against the King's troops, and Henry was escaping from his "ungrateful city," it was the Grand Provost who checked the pursuers at the Porte de la Conférence. Old writers say that the gate took its name from that circumstance, and tell how "François de Richelieu, Grand Prévôt de France, père du Cardinal de même nom, arrêta les Parisiens qui vouloient suivre le Roi, pour tâcher de le surprendre."

Luckily for his own fame, this "wise officer" was not an active agent in the murder of the Duc de Guise at Blois, a few months later. But he was sent to the Hôtel de Ville to arrest those dignified citizens whom the King suspected of being concerned in the Guise conspiracy. And in the following summer he performed his last duty towards Henry III. by arresting the miserable monk, Jacques Clément, whom the Duchesse de Montpensier, sister of Guise, had persuaded to earn his salvation by murdering the King, "enemy of the Catholic religion."

In the confusion that followed Henry's death, the wise "Tristan" did not trust himself to the faction of the Guises. With other Catholic nobles, and in spite of family traditions, he turned to the one man in whose

hands he saw safety for France and himself, the Protestant Henry of Navarre. That clever Prince received him cordially and confirmed him in his appointments. So it came to pass that the nephew of "the Monk" reddened his sword with Catholic blood at Arques and at Ivry, and followed his new King, still as Grand Provost of France, to the camp before Paris. There his career was cut short by a fever in the summer of 1590, at the age of forty-two.

CHAPTER II

1590—1595

Friends and relations—The household at Richelieu—Country life in Poitou.

WHETHER the widow of François de Richelieu was in famine-stricken Paris during the siege—one of those afflicted ladies to whom the good-natured and politic Henry sent provisions first, passports later, that they might escape from the city—or whether she had already, her husband being so strongly in opposition to the ruling powers there, removed herself and her five children into the country it seems impossible to know.

She was not without influential friends in Paris; the more useful, perhaps, because they were not in the fighting line. Her father lived in the Rue Hautefeuille, near the Church of St. André-des-Arcs, in the heart of the Latin quarter; the old turrets of his house still remain. He was divided from the Rue du Bouloy, on the north side of the river beyond the Louvre, by two bridges, the Island, and a labyrinth of dirty, narrow, dangerous streets. There may well have been a gulf fixed, during those horrible months of the siege, between the old advocate and his daughter.

But Amador de la Porte, his younger son, and Denys Bouthillier, his head clerk and future successor, were not likely to let Suzanne and her children suffer any unnecessary privation. Both were strong and brilliant men, worthy members of that *bourgeoisie* which was the pride and life of Paris. Amador, some years younger than his

sister, was apparently too restless to settle down in his father's profession. But François de la Porte had been very useful, as advocate, to the Order of Malta. They rewarded him by receiving Amador as a Knight of the Order, without a too close inquiry into his proofs of nobility. His foot once on the ladder, Amador rose to be Commander, then Grand Prior of France, and by his nephew's favour held several important governments.

These two men, Amador de la Porte and Denys Bouthillier, were constant friends and guardians of the Richelieu children. Bouthillier and his sons were devoted to the Cardinal throughout his career, to their very great advantage. Claude, the eldest, made an enormous fortune as *surintendant des finances* under Louis XIII., and his son Léon, Comte de Chavigny, was a minister under both Richelieu and Mazarin. Sébastien and Victor rose high in the Church. Denys became private secretary to Queen Marie de Médicis, and was created Baron de Rancé; he was the father of Armand Jean de Rancé, the famous Abbot of La Trappe.

Through the Cardinal's other La Porte uncle, of whom, personally, not much is known, the old advocate's family stepped up into something like equality with the highest in the kingdom. His son, Charles, a bold, eccentric creature, attached himself from the first to the fortunes of his cousin, Armand de Richelieu, and by this means became a Marshal of France and Duc de la Meilleraye. He was one of the Cardinal's most trusted aides-de-camp, and later on, a conspicuous figure in Paris during the troubles of the Fronde.

In the autumn of 1590, if not sooner, a family of women and children was established at the Château de Richelieu. There were Dame Françoise de Rochechouart, widow of the Seigneur Louis, and her daughter, also a widow, Françoise du Plessis, Madame de Marconnay. There were Suzanne de la Porte, widow of the Grand Provost, and her five children; Françoise, a girl of twelve—who married first the Seigneur de Beauvau, secondly, René de Vignerot, Seigneur du Pont-de-Courlay, and was the mother of the

Cardinal's favourite niece, Madame de Combalet, afterwards created Duchesse d'Aiguillon; Henry, a well-known courtier of Louis XIII.'s young days; Alphonse, at this time intended for the Bishopric of Luçon; Armand Jean, the political genius, now a delicate, feverish atom of five years old; Nicole, who married the Marquis de Maillé-Brézé, and whose daughter, Claire Clémence, became the wife of the great Condé.

The head of this household, according to immemorial French custom, was the grandmother, Françoise de Rochechouart. Her rule, no doubt, was severe, and there are evidences that her daughter-in-law, a woman of gentler type, suffered under it. The hard old aristocrat who had condescended in her marriage with Louis du Plessis was scornful of the *bourgeoise* mother of her grandchildren. She was soured too by the losses and troubles of her life. Probably Suzanne brought from Paris the habits of a civilisation that did not suit that rough old home, that "ancient house of stone, roofed with slates," strongly fortified with walls and moats as useful now as in the time of the English wars, when they were new. In 1590, the civil wars were by no means at an end. The province, devastated for years by Catholics and Huguenots flying at each other's throats, now suffered equally in the struggle between Henry IV. and the League. Poitiers took the latter side, and for three years, from 1591 to 1594, the King's army besieged it in vain. All the neighbouring country, including the valley of the Mable, was ruined and unsafe. A band of ruffian soldiers sacked the small town of Faye-la-Vineuse, on the hills overlooking Richelieu. No wonder if the gentle Suzanne, "loyal lady" and tender mother, was kept sleepless by burning horizons as often as by her little Armand, shivering with fever in the unwholesome mists of that river valley.

Her anxieties indeed were many; for though Dame Françoise might be mistress of the house, all the business connected with her children and her inheritance devolved on her. And the Richelieu affairs were in an embarrassed state. The Grand Provost had left heavy debts behind

him. There was the management of various small estates and châteaux in Poitou, which by some means or other had become possessions of the family: one of these was Mausson, name of ill-omen, which had been taken in exchange for an estate in Picardy, part of the dowry of Suzanne de la Porte.

She was an excellent woman of business, with hereditary instincts of law and order. All her tact and capacity, directed by strong affection, were devoted to the interests of her children. The words she wrote to Armand, years later, when he was Bishop of Luçon, seem to have been the key-note of her life:

"L'inquiétude que j'ai me tue et je vois bien que je n'aurai jamais de joie que lorsque, vous sachant tous heureux, je serai en paradis."

With such a mother, and with an indulgent aunt in Madame de Marconnay—in spite of a fierce grandmother, barred gates and alarms of war—the children's life at Richelieu need not have been unhappy. Indeed it was not so, if one may judge by the Cardinal's recollections of it, and his constant devotion to the old place where most of his childhood was spent. After all, the family was on the winning side. France was growing tired of the League, attracted by the sunny, accommodating patriotism of Henry IV. If the harvests of Poitou were destroyed, woods cut down, villages burnt and pillaged, it was often, odd as this may sound, the work of friends, and in the intervals of these stormy visits of robber bands, country life went on cheerfully.

The strong old manor nestled snugly on the islet in the river-bed, something after the fashion of Chenonceaux in Touraine or Bazouges in Anjou. On the border of these two provinces and of Poitou, the country round Richelieu had something of the character of all three. The rich fertility of Touraine, the vineyards and gardens, though not unknown here, soon gave way to the forests and marshes of the wilder provinces. But Richelieu had its park and its avenues, leading from the high road which ran south from Chinon and Champigny into Poitou. By

this road came all the travellers, all the visitors: Amador de la Porte, the beloved uncle, with news from Paris; Jacques du Plessis, the great-uncle, the non-resident Bishop of Luçon, with his eye on a young successor; or, less welcome to the heads of the family, the Duc de Montpensier, the feudal neighbour, with his pack of wolf-hounds and swaggering troop of guards and followers. One may fancy, even then, that the dark eyes of Armand watched the owner of Champigny, scarred from the wars, without much friendliness.

There are signs that the family at Richelieu was on kindly terms with its neighbours of lower estate. The curé of Braye, M. Yver, who said mass often in the chapel of the château, was an intimate friend. There was no oppression of the peasants, who lived round about in their low, mud-floored, one-roomed cottages, and eked out their poor harvest by catching game in the forest or fishing in the river. All through the western provinces, indeed, then and for long afterwards, seigneur and peasant lived well together; the contrary was the exception. And the contrary came to pass, in great measure, through the action of the founder of absolute monarchy, the boy who ran about hand in hand with his mother at Richelieu.

In the meanwhile, Dame Suzanne befriended and doctored the people, knew them all by name, visited them, gossiped with them. She and her children witnessed their marriages, were sponsors at the baptism of their babes; a few years later, in 1618, the old registers of Braye bear witness that the infant son of young Henry du Plessis was named at the font, in the chapel at Richelieu, by two "poor orphans," assisted by "ten other poor persons." The gates of the château were open to any humble neighbours who suffered in the wars; the kitchen supplied them with food, sometimes not too plentiful even there; and holy-days found the courtyard full of peasants playing their bagpipes, dancing their quaint provincial dances, singing the songs of Poitou. Thus masters and servants alike managed to forget the hardships and terrors of the time.

Among scenes like these the Cardinal's early childhood

was spent, and to his dying day, with all France at his feet, he loved that corner of Poitou. It must be added that the traditions of Richelieu itself, supported by many writers of the seventeenth century, declare that he was born there. When Mademoiselle de Montpensier, in 1637, paid her visit to Madame d'Aiguillon at the magnificent palace into which the Cardinal had transformed the little stronghold of his fathers, and found some of the rooms inconceivably small and mean, compared with the stately exterior, it was explained to her that the Cardinal had ordered Le Mercier, his architect, to preserve unaltered that part of the old building where his parents had lived and where he was born. The witnesses on the same side are too many to quote. On the other hand, Richelieu himself declared on more than one occasion that he was born in Paris, a Parisian, a native of the city which always had his heart; and his enemies dwelt strongly on the same fact, treating the Poitevin theory as an outcome of that immense pride and vanity which encouraged the Cardinal's worshippers to represent his family and their possessions as older and greater than they really were; feudal magnates of centuries, instead of country gentlemen with their fortune to seek.

CHAPTER III

1595—1607

The University of Paris—The College of Navarre—The Marquis du Chillou—A change of prospect—A student of theology—The Abbé de Richelieu at Rome—His consecration

BEFORE Armand de Richelieu was eleven years old, his uncle Amador, who was among the first to recognize the boy's brilliant gifts, carried him off to Paris and placed him at the University. It was the family intention that Armand should carve out his living in a career of arms. The eldest brother, Henry, the seigneur of Richelieu, was to marry, and to cut a figure at Court. Being a charming and agreeable young fellow, he was likely to succeed in this line. Alphonse was a saint, and a born ecclesiastic; his future needed no arrangement; the see of Luçon was waiting for him. After the death of the great-uncle, Jacques du Plessis, in 1592, the revenues of the diocese were taken over by a titular bishop—no other than M. Yver, curé of Braye and chaplain at Richelieu—a worthy warming-pan who paid the largest portion to Madame de Richelieu, and wasted as little as possible on the cathedral and the diocese. The canons rebelled and complained most unreasonably, we are told; but Henry IV. had confirmed Henry III.'s grant of the bishopric to the Richelieu family, and the Chapter could obtain no redress. They had to wait till Alphonse was of age to be consecrated.

It was the right thing for every young Frenchman, of every rank, whatever his future walk in life might be, to go through his course at one of the universities. A king's

son might be found on the Paris benches, listening to the same lecture with the clever son of a tradesman or even a peasant from a remote province. The poor students were quite as numerous as the rich; they filled the high houses and crowded the narrow streets of the famous Pays Latin; they "lived as they could," and their character as a community did not alter much in the course of centuries.

When Armand de Richelieu was first entered at the College of Navarre, where "the great Henry" had studied before him, the University was at a low ebb, both as to professors and students. The wars of the League, the fighting in the streets, the horrors of the siege, had driven most decent people away from Paris, while armies of vagabonds and fugitives took possession of the city, even of that "city within a city," which the University had been ever since the time when Philippe Auguste built its enclosing wall.

That wall still existed long after the young days of Richelieu. Its broad ditches, its battlements and frequent towers, its seven or eight formidable gateways, two of which defended a bridge and a ferry over the Seine, while the Tour de Nesle, at the western corner, frowned across at the Louvre—all enclosed with mediæval strength that Latin quarter, a half-moon in shape, which sloped up, a mass of lanes, colleges, convents, churches, to the old royal abbey and Church of Ste. Geneviève, where her shrine, the chief religious treasure of Paris, was kept; destroyed in the eighteenth century and replaced by the Pantheon with Voltaire's bones and Soufflot's ugly dome.

The University existed before the colleges. They were founded, one by one, by charitable men and women, mostly for the benefit of the poor scholars of different special towns or countries. Often their names told their story; but sometimes they were called by the name of the founder, such as the "Collège du Cardinal Lemoine."

The College of Navarre was one of the best known and highest in reputation. It was founded in 1304 by Jeanne, wife of Philippe le Bel and Queen of Navarre in

her own right, in memory of the victory of Mons-en-Puelle in Flanders. It was thus nearly three hundred years old when Armand de Richelieu entered it, and had already that royal and military reputation which lasted through three or four centuries more. An old writer on Paris says that the sons of the greatest nobles in the kingdom boarded in this college, and in order that they might not be distracted by intercourse with outside students—a real danger, one would think, and of worse things than distraction—no other scholars were received. "Navarre" did not always remain so exclusive. But this was probably its character in Richelieu's time, though we do not positively know whether the young gentleman, with his private tutor and his footmen—all of whom remained many years in his service—lodged in the college or at his grandfather's house in the Rue Hautefeuille.

The College of Navarre had had famous men among its tutors and professors. Nicolas Oresme, one of its early head masters, was tutor to King Charles V., who owed to him his surname of "The Wise." He was a translator of Aristotle, and is supposed to have made the first French version of the Bible. Somewhat later, the celebrated mystic, Jean Gerson, believed by many to be the real author of the *Imitatio Christi*, was a teacher in the college and became Chancellor of the University. A famous Principal, also Chancellor, was Cardinal d'Ailly, Archbishop of Cambray, a theologian of tremendous strength, known at the Council of Constance as the "Eagle of France," and "the Hammer of the Heretics."

The traditions of "Navarre" were inspiring and severe. At the end of the sixteenth century, when young Richelieu was going through its courses of "grammar" and "philosophy," the college was ruled by Jean Yon, a lover of Cicero, of discipline, and of Church ceremonies. Long after the days of dry study and compulsory Latin were over, the Cardinal kept a friendly recollection of his old master, and declared that he could never see him without "a feeling of respect and fear." Probably, therefore, Jean Yon was wisely careful to hide his admiration of the boy,

who, according to one of his biographers, "avala comme d'un trait toute la grammaire," knew by instinct how to baffle his examiners by puzzling counter-questions, and dazzled both teachers and comrades by the bold and sparkling flashes of his genius.

But Master Yon was not always the stern pedagogue. The Cardinal ever remembered with peculiar pleasure taking part, as a singing boy, in the great procession which marched from Ste. Geneviève on her hill, right across Paris, to visit the tomb of St. Denis. The whole University joined in the procession, and on this occasion it was led by Jean Yon and a chanting choir from the College of Navarre.

Once upon a time, they say, that procession was so long that when the head was entering the Church of St. Denis, far away in the northern outskirts of the city, the tail, of great dignity, had not yet come forth from the Church of the Mathurins, where the general rendezvous had been fixed. This was in the time of Charles VI., when all Paris was praying and making processions that his lost senses might be restored to him. In those days, we are told, the University of Paris was the centre of learning for all the nations of Europe and the mother of all their universities, including "Oxfort en Angleterre." Her European fame and the number of her students had dwindled a good deal before the day when Armand de Richelieu, the slim, keen, black-haired boy of twelve, marched in her procession as an *enfant de chœur*.

Down the hill they wound, threading the dark labyrinth of high college walls, then perhaps following the Rue St. Jacques, the old Roman road, down to the Petit Châtelet, guarding with its tunnelled gateway the entrance to the Petit Pont; or, more likely, keeping to their own Latin-speaking quarter as far west as the Pont St. Michel —the Pont Neuf was not yet finished—and there crossing to the Island and passing in front of the Palais de Justice, through crowds of men of law, red-robed councillors, officials and hangers-on of the Parliament, quite as busy and as noisy as the ecclesiastical throng they had left

behind them. The Pont-au-Change, haunt of money-changers and bird-catchers, carried them on to the farther shore; one of those steep and ancient bridges, chiefly built of wood and blocked with houses, shops and stalls, which were difficult to cross at all times and were constantly in danger from flood or fire. Then the procession's way was almost blocked by the great round towers and frowning prison walls of the Grand Châtelet. Then through dark and narrow ways it passed out into the wider spaces, the gayer air, of the Paris of the north bank, of kings and their palaces, and leaving the Louvre to the left, the Hôtel de Ville, Bastille, and Temple far to the right, went on by the Rue St. Denis towards the gate of that name, and so out into the frequented road leading to the old towers that sheltered the shrine of the Saint.

All the way there was a constant carillon of bells from a hundred steeples; the red and gold of vestments and banners glowed in the sunshine; trumpets brayed; and with loud chanting the procession paced along. To a boy fresh from his lessons, who was to live on into more colourless times, such a holiday glimpse of the Middle Ages may very well have been a pleasant recollection.

At this time young Richelieu was looking forward to nothing but the life of a soldier, and of course a mercenary one, for his family was likely to endow him with little means of living. The world was his oyster, which he with sword must open. It was nothing new: he would walk in the footsteps of his father and his great-uncles, with the advantage of serving a King whom he heartily admired; of this his Memoirs give proof enough.

When the usual University course was over, M. de la Porte proceeded to make a man and a soldier of his nephew. He placed him at the famous Academy of M. de Pluvinel, a former companion-in-arms of the Grand Provost, who had made a career for himself as a trainer of young gentlemen. He taught them fencing, riding, dancing, music, mathematics, various manly games. He was an authority on fashion and style, wit and manners,

the ways of foreign nations ; in short, he turned boys fresh from college into men of the world, courtiers, soldiers, diplomatists. There was scarcely a leading man in France in the early seventeenth century who had not passed through the " manège royal " of M. de Pluvinel.

A title was necessary, in order to swagger successfully among the gay *cadets* of the Academy. Armand became Marquis du Chillou, taking the name from a small estate in Poitou brought into the family by his great-grandmother.

His years of study at the Academy seem to have been among the happiest of his life. Made mentally of steel and flame as he was, ancestral hardness and strength of will joined with a passionate ambition all his own, the fighting career of a successful soldier was likely to attract him irresistibly. When he was young, it seemed indeed the one chance of shining in the world, of commanding men. And he never lost his love for the profession he had to renounce, though it became clear that for a daring spirit such as his, the red robe was as practical a garment as the buff coat. " Sous le prêtre, on retrouve toujours en lui le soldat," says M. Hanotaux.

There was one drawback to the military prospects of Armand de Richelieu. The delicate, aguish boy had not grown into a strong youth. His keen spirit was now, as ever, a sword too sharp for its frail sheath. Hard study and lack of fresh air during his college days had had their likely effect on his weak constitution and slight frame. For his sake, his mother did not mourn over the family circumstances that forbade him, after all, to be a soldier. " Mon malade," as she called him, was not of those who could sleep on open field or fell, in mud or mire, as soundly as within stone walls with curtains round his bed.

For the family, it was a question of losing the revenues of the see of Luçon. Alphonse de Richelieu, its intended Bishop, at the age of nineteen or twenty, turned away in disgust from the worldly-wise arrangement, and decided to become a Carthusian monk. It may not be unfair to

describe him as "dévot et bizarre"; but one seems to see in this singular resolution an outcome of the reaction against the dead and conscienceless state into which the sixteenth century had brought the French Church; the reaction which was already living and moving in such men as François de Sales, Vincent de Paul, Pierre de Bérulle, though leading them, as to their religious life, into reforming action rather than lonely contemplation.

Armand's choice was soon made. No doubt the change was to him inevitable. There could not be two young men more different than himself and Alphonse; yet he too had a conscience of his own, of the truly Latin kind which demands any and every sacrifice for the sake of the family. He is said to have written to his uncle, who, one may well believe, was sincerely sorry for him: "The will of God be done: I accept all, for the good of the Church and the glory of our name." The latter aspiration, at least, was fulfilled.

At seventeen, in the year 1602, the Marquis du Chillou laid down his sword and his title, left M. de Pluvinel's Academy and returned to the University. A year or two later, there was no more eager student of philosophy and theology than the Abbé de Richelieu. There are merry stories of the time which suggest that he and his private tutor M. Mulot, afterwards his chaplain, were concerned in wild pranks, such as robbing gardens and orchards, which would have been impossible under the strict discipline of old Master Yon. There is a pretty legend which tells that the Cardinal, in his last days, sent for an old college gardener whose peaches he had stolen—the good man's name was Rabelais, and he came from Chinon—and paid him a large sum of money as compensation for being both robbed and frightened: at that time, an unlucky wretch who was summoned before the Eminentissime went in very reasonable fear of his life.

The sober University, in its clock-work course, hardly knew what to make of Armand de Richelieu. He swallowed theology as he had swallowed grammar, and the ordinary progress of learning was far too slow for him. After

studying independently with several learned masters, especially with Richard Smith, an Englishman, of the University of Louvain, afterwards Vicar Apostolic in England, he was ambitious to hold a public disputation at the Sorbonne.

The doctors of that reverend foundation refused the unusual request; but Richelieu, who ardently desired to become an adept in controversy, persuaded his old College of Navarre to be less timidly narrow and conservative. Here the lad of nineteen, worn to a shadow by studying hard eight hours a day, set forth his thesis and defended it against all comers. The listeners were slightly uneasy, for his argument was based rather on philosophy than on strictly theological grounds, and was indeed flavoured by the influence of Jansenius, who came to Paris about this time. But the long struggle between Gallicans and Ultramontanes, Bishops and Jesuits, was only at its beginning, and Jansenism proper was not born; the sixteenth century had known little more than the fiercer, simpler quarrel between Catholics and Protestants, the heretic and the faithful. As a fact, in his own original way, Richelieu held all the doctrines approved and taught by the Sorbonne.

There was every reason why the future Bishop should hurry on his theological studies. The Chapter of Luçon had completely lost its patience; and this is not surprising, for both the cathedral and the episcopal palace were falling into ruins, while no money could be extracted from M. Yver and Madame de Richelieu, until, at last, a decree of the Parliament forced them to provide for the necessary repairs. If the bishopric was to remain in the Richelieu family, Armand must be consecrated with as little delay as possible.

He was not yet near the canonical age of a bishop. He had, however, been ordained deacon in 1606, and early in that year, while he was still hurrying through his last examinations, King Henry wrote to his Ambassador at Rome, recommending the Abbé Armand Jean du Plessis, royally nominated to the bishopric of Luçon, to the favour of His Holiness Paul V., and praying for an early con-

secration on the ground of the young man's "mérite et suffisance," which were such as to make the legal delays morally quite unnecessary.

Such dispensations were common enough, but this one was slow in coming. Paul V., the Borghese Pope, had not long been elected, but was already known for his determined will and strong sense of duty. He was not a man who would lightly break through any laws or customs of the Church, and certainly not to please King Henry IV., whose conversion he distrusted and whose way of life he condemned. The Abbé de Richelieu, hearing nothing from Rome, resolved to wait no longer. In the autumn of 1606 he left Paris and travelled hard to Rome, very impatient, and quite sure that if he could once gain the Pope's ear and plead his own cause, it would speedily be won.

He was not mistaken, though Paul V. received him coldly on his first introduction by the Ambassador: a self-confident, presumptuous boy who expected to be ordained priest and consecrated bishop at twenty-one, was not likely to meet with instant favour from an elderly, legal-minded martinet. Various tales are told, by friends and enemies, as to the means by which Richelieu quickly gained his ends at the Papal Court. Some say that he added a year to his age, or falsified the date of his baptism, and that the Pope, hearing too late of the trick, observed, "This young man will be a great knave." On the other hand, it is said that, struck with admiration of Richelieu's genius, the Pope made no difficulty, saying, "It is just that one whose wisdom is above his age should be ordained under age." On the whole, the latter story seems the more probable; but neither has any real foundation.

It is certain, at any rate, that the Abbé de Richelieu made the best use of the months he spent at Rome, and convinced Paul V., himself a clever man, that King Henry's praise was not undeserved. He preached before the Pope, and his ready learning and splendour of diction were considered miraculous. He carried on arguments with His

Holiness on the morals of Henry and other subjects, so firmly yet so respectfully that Paul was altogether charmed. He studied the spirit of Rome, that mysterious city which was at once "the capital of the Catholic world and the centre of the civilized world." As the centre of an older world still, of ancient history and pagan art, Rome had not the same attraction for him. All that was to come later, when the Cardinal attempted, without great success, to pose as one of the chief art patrons in Europe.

At this time, his whole mind was given to present advancement, and his intuition as to his own interest was faultless. He learned Italian and Spanish, he courted the Cardinals and other dignitaries, and while dazzling his company with all the light French brilliancy of his young wit, he pleased them by the gentleness and modesty he knew well how to assume. Thus he saved himself from much envy and jealousy which might have nipped his career at the outset.

On April 17, 1607, Armand Jean du Plessis de Richelieu, aged twenty-two years and seven months, was ordained priest and consecrated bishop by the Cardinal de Givry, who had always been his friend. The suffering diocese of Luçon was no longer without a head, and the Roman Easter bells rang in one of the greatest figures in French history.

PART II

THE BISHOP OF LUÇON

1607—1622

CHAPTER I

1607—1608

A Bishop at the Sorbonne—State of France under Henry IV.—Henry IV., his Queen and his Court—The Nobles and Princes—The unhealthiness of Paris—The Bishop's departure.

THE diocese of Luçon—in itself one of the least desirable in France—had to endure some months more of neglect before its new Bishop came into residence.

Richelieu's return to France, in the early summer of 1607, was a return to Paris and the University, which now saw the unusual sight of a bishop among its students. There were still examinations to pass and distinctions to gain: the theological honours of the Sorbonne were not lightly bestowed, even on a dignitary of the Church. But Richelieu, once more, triumphantly satisfied his examiners, and in the autumn of 1607 he was admitted to the degree of Doctor of the Sorbonne. One may say that the old institution was his mother and his child. She trained the brain that transformed France and directed Europe; she was made illustrious by his munificent care, and his feverish life at last found rest in the shadow of her walls.

In the winter of 1607–8, Henry IV. was at the height of his power and popularity, although certain dreamers, prophets of evil, necromancers, and such-like creatures of the darkness, suggested that his useful reign was near

FROM AN ENGRAVING AFTER THE PICTURE BY FRANÇOIS PORBUS

its end. For whatever the immoralities of his life may have been—and they had a fatal influence on society—his political ends and means were excellent. His favourite dream was of a general European peace with religious toleration: and one need only realize the state of France a hundred years later—populations crushed by cruel taxation and dying of famine by thousands—to see what the difference might have been if Henry and Sully could have worked their will for twenty years more, keeping the nobles in check, insisting on justice, studying and carrying into practical effect the means of making the country prosperous by useful public works, by careful training in agriculture and other industries. Under Henry and his minister—who did not, however, share his master's popularity—farming was encouraged, rivers were made navigable, bridges were built, waste lands were reclaimed, new roads were made, new crops, such as potato and beet-root, were introduced, a labourer's tools were safe from seizure for debt. France was beginning to breathe after long horrors of civil war: feudal oppression was passing away, and the country generally was on the eve of better things, under the eye of a King who, absolute as he certainly meant to be, loved his people and wished them well. All was doomed to fall to pieces with the death of Henry, followed by the regency of a stupid woman and the new policy of Richelieu.

Henry was himself the centre point of Paris, the beloved city, which he made his home, only leaving the Louvre for visits to Saint-Germain and Fontainebleau, or for hunting excursions in the country. Small, active, carelessly dressed, ever on the move, the Parisians saw their King among them at all seasons, all hours, riding or driving in the streets, equally eager after business and amusement; gambling at the famous Fair of Saint-Germain—held during the early months of the year on the left bank of the Seine—or planning with Sully, within the walls of the Arsenal, those economies and financial rearrangements which gained him the reputation of being a miser. Henry was a curious character, half a hero, made of gold and of

clay; but his Parisians, as a rule, saw little but the gold. He was a familiar sight among them, the frank, good-natured man, with his rosy cheeks, long nose, and whitening beard and hair. They loved him because he was affable, kind, easy-going, polite, and yet could be stern and royal enough when any one displeased him. They loved his keen interest in the city, shown by plans for rebuilding and improving, some of which were already carried out when he died, while some lingered on into the days of Richelieu. His favourite works were the Grande Galerie of the Louvre, the Pont Neuf, the Hôtel de Ville, burnt by the Commune, and the Place Royale, now known as Place des Vosges.

The Court at the Louvre, under a King impatient of etiquette—except when Parliament or Protestants had to be awed, or foreign ambassadors received—seems to have been lacking in dignity. It had not the splendour, the mystery, the romance and cultivation, however evil, of the Valois; nor had it the stiff magnificence of an absolute Louis XIV. The tone of the Court, in fact, was *bourgeois*; and it is curious enough that the early seventeenth century in England, as well as in France, had this intimate flavour of something like vulgarity. James I. cracked coarse jokes with his courtiers and slapped them on the back. Henry IV., though a far more intelligent man, encouraged the same kind of manners among his jovial companions at the Louvre.

The King and Queen quarrelled perpetually, and in public. The young Bishop of Luçon, admitted at Court not only by the means of his elder brother, a popular courtier, but through the King's personal liking for him, saw with his own eyes scenes to which the Cardinal de Richelieu alluded in his Memoirs, dictated many years later. With all his enmity towards Marie de Médicis, he had to acknowledge that the King's love-affairs, result of the besetting weakness of a great prince, might justly have irritated a woman less naturally jealous, proud and unforgiving. As one intrigue succeeded another during the whole of Henry's later life, and as the Queen could never be brought to take these things meekly, it follows that peace seldom reigned at the Louvre. Henry, on his

side, turned the tables on his wife by injurious suspicions almost certainly without foundation, and the Duc de Sully himself told Richelieu that he had never known a week pass without a quarrel. On one occasion, in passionate anger, Marie raised her hand to box Henry's ears! "M. de Sully stopped her so roughly that her arm was bruised, crying out with an oath: 'Are you mad, Madame? He could have your head off in half an hour. Have you lost your senses, not to remember what the King can do?' The King went out; and after much coming and going he (Sully) appeased them both. Afterwards, the Queen complained that the Duc de Sully had struck her."

Sometimes these quarrels had a comic side. The Queen would refuse to dine as usual with the King, and would order a small table to be brought into her cabinet. On these occasions the good-tempered Henry, who never could be angry long, and who preferred living at peace with a wife he did not really dislike, would send her choice morsels from his table, even from his plate. If Marie's temper had not reached the level of accepting a peace-offering, she would coldly return the dainties. Court gossip declared that she was afraid of poison.

In his book on Marie de Médicis, M. Batiffol gives a curious description, drawn from old records, of the royal dinner at the Louvre when the King and Queen dined together.

No one sat at the table with them, but a privileged public, including the whole Court, crowded the room. The Swiss guards stood round the table, bearded, fierce, German-speaking warriors, "old servants of the Crown," leaning on their halberds, dressed in velvet, white, blue, and red. Six gentlemen served their Majesties, taking the dishes from the "officers of the kitchen," who brought them into the room. The *menu*, a very considerable one, was drawn up by the Queen's *maître d'hôtel* and countersigned by herself. Sometimes, generally on Sundays only, the King's musicians gave a concert during dinner. As a rule, there was a good deal of conversation. The King and Queen talked to the courtiers who stood in ranks

behind the Swiss Guard; not of "affairs," but of any light and interesting subject that might occur.

On such an occasion the King may well have shown special favour to a young man in episcopal purple, of middle height, very thin, with black hair, a delicate, pointed face, keen dark eyes, under a broad brow full of intelligence, quick to catch and respond to every slightest glance from Royalty. Young Richelieu—"My Bishop," Henry called him—may have had stories to tell of his Roman experiences, stories pleasing to the King, who had taken the trouble to push his fortunes; and the wit, the memory, the reasoning power, which amazed the Sorbonne, may also have been noticeable at the Louvre.

Sometimes the talk led on to thin ice, and Richelieu knew it: for instance, when the King reminded him of certain things he had written about the Maréchal de Biron, his godfather's son, beheaded for conspiracy in 1602. It was a lesson as to giving a handle to jealous enemies, which Richelieu did not soon forget.

Dinner over, the Queen returned to her dogs and monkeys and parrots, her gaming, card-tricks and music, or walked in the garden, or drove in the city, perhaps visiting her divorced predecessor, Queen Marguerite de Valois—large, self-indulgent, with a flaxen wig—who led an extravagantly immoral but literary and charitable life in Paris, the adopted sister and aunt of the Royal family; perhaps driving out to Saint-Germain to see the children, who lived there, a large household, legitimate and otherwise, under the care of the Baronne—afterwards Marquise—de Montglat.

The King too, though never forgetful of public business, had his amusements of many kinds—gambling, hunting, building, making love. Sometimes he and the Queen dined out together in Paris, frequently with M. Zamet, banker and money-lender and Henry's very faithful servant, at his palatial hôtel in the Marais. Sometimes they delighted the Parisians by sharing their amusements in the streets and on the bridges—jousts, sham fights in masquerade, running at the ring. Then were to be seen

the young nobles of France, infected with Henry's own dash and daring recklessness, flinging themselves so desperately into these mock battles that real wounds were given and lives were lost. The famous Baron de Bassompierre, chief of the "dix-sept seigneurs," leaders of fashion, to whose exclusive ranks Henry de Richelieu also belonged, was nearly killed in one of these encounters in the paved court of the Louvre.

Hardouin de Péréfixe, tutor to Louis XIV. and afterwards Archbishop of Paris, wrote for his pupil's instruction a history of his royal grandfather, Henry the Great. Drawing on his own memory, or something very near it, he sketched the state of society at the beginning of the century. While the King and his ministers were working hard in lifting their country out of the slough of war and abject misery, most of the nobles were finding mischief for their idle hands to do. The Memoirs of Bassompierre and others prove that Péréfixe told less than the truth: he was too courtier-like, too careful of offending young royal ears, to give much idea of the brutality of manners which existed in the society of Henry IV. and Marie de Médicis; but he describes vividly the temper of the men among whom Armand de Richelieu, clever, poor, observant, shielded by his elder brother's popularity, was growing into manhood.

"The French noblesse," says Péréfixe, "being at peace, could not be doing nothing; some spent their time in hunting; some in the company of ladies; some studied *belles lettres* and mathematics; others travelled in foreign lands; others kept up the exercise of war under Prince Maurice in Holland. But many, with itching hands, eager to show off their courage without leaving home, became punctilious, and at the least word, or at crossing glances, had their swords in their hands. Thus a mania for duels seized on the minds of gentlemen. And these encounters were so frequent that the nobles shed nearly as much blood between themselves as their enemies had made them lose in battle."

Royal edicts, one after another, had little effect in

cooling these hot spirits; especially as Henry usually forgave a crime which his laws threatened with forfeiture of life and goods. In the following reign such laws were less of a mockery, as the nobles found to their cost. Louis XIII. was made of harder stuff; and Richelieu had learnt by personal experience—his brother's death in a duel with the Marquis de Thémines—the need of a strong hand.

There was not much personal distinction, at this time, among the grandees of France. Henry de Bourbon, Prince de Condé, nearest in blood to the throne, was a shy, gloomy youth, mean in looks and character, and though really clever and ambitious, eccentric to the verge of madness. "Monsieur le Prince," says Brunet, "père du grand Condé, s'imaginoit être quelque fois oiseau et d'autres fois sanglier, et se cachoit sous les lits et sous les tables comme s'il avoit été dans les forêts." It was not till 1609, after Richelieu had retired to his diocese, that King Henry, for his own ends, married this young man to the marvellously beautiful Mademoiselle de Montmorency. Then, to the King's rage and disgust, Condé proved that he had some individuality, and ran away with his wife to Flanders. But for the dagger of Ravaillac, a European war might have followed on this elopement.

François de Bourbon, Prince de Conti, the King's first cousin, uncle of Condé, brother of Henry's old companion-in-arms and once himself a fighter, was elderly, deaf, and incapable. He appeared little at Court, but lived in Paris on the revenues of the Abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Prés. His wife, Louise Marguerite de Lorraine, a brilliant mischief-maker, with her mother, the lively old Duchesse de Guise, widow of Henry le Balafré, was among the few really intimate friends of Queen Marie de Médicis. Henry IV., who had once thought of marrying her, ended by disliking her, resenting her influence over his wife. But she kept her place at Court, and after the Prince de Conti's death she is said to have secretly married Bassompierre, first of courtiers and her lover of many years.

Charles de Bourbon, Comte de Soissons, usually known

as Monsieur le Comte, was the Prince de Conti's half-brother, his mother, Françoise d'Orléans-Longueville, having been the second wife of Louis I., Prince de Condé. Though outwardly loyal to Henry IV., he was perhaps the most dangerous enemy the King had in his own immediate circle. Ambitious, proud and violent, he never forgave Henry for breaking an early promise of marrying him to his sister, Catherine of Navarre. Jealous of his own position, he resented every mark of favour shown by the King, especially the honours showered on the young Duc de Vendôme, Henry's eldest legitimised son. If a fit of the sulks had not kept Monsieur le Comte out of Paris at the time of Henry's death, he would have disputed the regency with the Queen. Not being on the spot, he was neither clever, strong, nor popular enough to disturb the appointed order of things.

Henry de Bourbon, Duc de Montpensier—familiar to the Richelieu family as lord of Champigny—was of no account at all, in court or camp, during his later years. But he had been an heroic soldier. Son of that Montpensier, the leader and patron of "the Monk" Richelieu and his brother, who swept Poitou with fire and sword in the religious wars, and of his furious Duchess, the soul of the League, the sister of Henry le Balafré, who brought about the murder of Henry III., he, with so many other Catholic princes and nobles, fought his uncles and the League under the banner of Henry of Navarre. A terrible wound in the face received at Dreux, where he commanded a regiment of cavalry, brought Henry de Montpensier's public career to an end at twenty-seven. His life, after this, was one of more or less suffering. He fell out of favour for some time with the King, being suspected of sympathy with the Biron conspiracy. He married, in middle life, his cousin Henriette Catherine de Joyeuse, another of the Queen's intimate friends, and they had one daughter, born in 1605, the heiress of all the immense Montpensier possessions; by her marriage with Gaston of France the mother of the famous Anne Marie d'Orléans, Duchesse de Montpensier, commonly known as La Grande Mademoiselle.

M. de Montpensier appears to have lived a great deal at Champigny, a favourite among his many châteaux. Thirty years after his death, on her way to visit the new splendours of Richelieu, his granddaughter found that he was still beloved there, although the almighty Cardinal, levelling his house with the ground, would gladly have destroyed his memory.

The Duke died at his hôtel in Paris on the last day of February 1608, wasted by a long decline, and devotedly nursed to the end by his eccentric Capuchin father-in-law, Père Ange, in the world Duc de Joyeuse. "Bon prince," l'Estoile says of Montpensier, "and as such regretted and mourned by the King, the nobility and all the people." The usual amusements of the Carnival were stopped; even the little Dauphin was not allowed to dance his ballet before the King. Three weeks later a funeral service was held at Notre Dame, with an oration by the popular preacher M. Fenouillet, Bishop of Montpellier. The ceremony, which was simple, derived dignity from the presence of one hundred and twenty poor men in long robes, carrying torches. Another and grander service was held in April. Between these two occasions, the last male descendant of Robert, son of Saint Louis, was conveyed with an escort of three hundred horse to Champigny, and was buried in the chapel which still exists there.

The Duc de Montpensier's widow married Charles, Duc de Guise, who, with his brothers, represented the princely House of Lorraine at the French Court. By birth and position, of course, he was one of the first men in France; personally he was of little account, and hardly a worthy descendant of the great Dukes of the sixteenth century. He had not even their looks, being short and snub-nosed. He was witty, agreeable and generous, very frivolous and a great flirt. Richelieu, in the first volume of his *Memoirs*, gives Henry IV.'s own estimate of this head of the Guise family: "Plus de montre que d'effet"; rather brilliant in company, and judged capable of great things by those who did not know him; but so slothful and lazy that he cared for nothing but

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pleasure, "et qu'en effet son esprit n'était pas plus grand que son nez."

Among the more conspicuous nobles, the Duc de Bouillon, the malcontent leader of the Protestants, was a constant thorn in the King's side. The Duc d'Épernon, an ambitious, adventurous courtier of Gascon origin, had been a favourite of Henry III., and was not much loved by Henry IV., who did not trust him. His son, Bernard, married Gabrielle-Angélique de Bourbon, the King's daughter by the Marquise de Verneuil. This alliance was roughly declined by the old Duc de Montmorency, Constable of France, to whom Henry proposed it for his splendid young son, that Henry de Montmorency, last of the direct line, whose high head was among those to be mown down, at a future day, by the implacable Cardinal.

Among left-hand Royalties, the oldest was Charles de Valois, Comte d'Auvergne, afterwards Duc d'Angoulême, a man of a certain courage and humorous charm, but foolish, dishonest, and unlucky. He was the son of Charles IX. and Marie Touchet, who married the Comte d'Entraigues after the King's death, and became the mother of Henriette d'Entraigues, Marquise de Verneuil, Henry IV.'s passion and the special abhorrence of Marie de Médicis. In a fit of jealous fury, and in the supposed interest of her children, Madame de Verneuil intrigued with Spain against Henry. It was only the King's enduring infatuation which saved her half-brother, the Comte d'Auvergne, from losing his head. As it was, he spent ten of his best years, from 1606 to 1616, shut up in the Bastille.

Henry's own son by Gabrielle d'Estrées, Duchesse de Beaufort, the legitimised prince who was first known as César-Monsieur, then created Duc de Vendôme, was the spoilt favourite among his children. No more odious young fellow was to be found in France. Spiteful, of vicious tendencies, "c'est un mauvais drôle, violent, moqueur, brutal." There was every probability that César, whom the King openly preferred to his little lawful son, the future Louis XIII., would one day be the most power-

ful of all the princes. Henry had already arranged a marriage for him with a rich heiress of royal blood, Françoise de Lorraine, only daughter of the Duc de Mercœur.

Such were the bearers of some of the grandest old names in France, during the last years of Henry IV.'s reign. Hardly one of these men had any influence on affairs, either of the court or the nation. Concini and his wife, the Queen's Italian favourites, were powerful at the Louvre and lived splendidly, though they worked chiefly behind the scenes as long as Henry lived. The Duc de Sully, with his royal friend and master, governed the kingdom. His wise white beard, his strict and careful management of the finances, demanded and obtained respect. This clever and obstinate Huguenot was certainly the best-feared man in France. He was also cordially hated for his grim, uncompromising manners, his impatient scorn of all courtly weaknesses and extravagances. But he was the one great statesman in France, beside whom the other ministers were of no account, and he would have laughed aloud, in the year 1608, if any one had prophesied coming disgrace in his ears: an honourable disgrace, it is true, but never to be retrieved; while, equally incredible, the young bishop of an obscure diocese was to wield a power beyond his own most ambitious dreams.

Paris was an unpleasant place of abode in the winter of 1607–8, when Armand de Richelieu was engaged in making his way at Court. According to L'Estoile, the weather was extremely indisposed, "nebulous, damp and unhealthy." Great and small alike suffered from "force cathairres, avec force petites véroles, rougeoles, et pourpre:" from which many died, among others the Duc de Bouillon's daughter. People died suddenly of suffocation on the chest, the season being "tellement desreiglée" that it rained perpetually day and night. The terrible gloom was made responsible for horrid crimes of all sorts. The new year brought so severe a frost that men, women, cattle and birds died of cold in the fields about the city, or were partially frozen and maimed for life.

Evidently the Bishop of Luçon was among the sufferers from this abnormal season. He was obliged to excuse himself, on account of illness, from obeying the King's command to preach before the Court at Easter. After this disappointment, he was ill in bed for about four months, as we know from his letters to M. d'Alincourt, son of the Duc de Villeroy, Henry's Minister of Foreign Affairs, who had actively befriended him as ambassador in Rome. Richelieu was not ungrateful, and there is something more than worldly politeness in these graceful, sincere letters, written from his sick room to welcome M. and Mme. d'Alincourt back to Paris and to lament that his "fascheuse maladie" hinders him from hastening to kiss their hands.

In the late autumn of the same year the claims and grumblings of Richelieu's far-off diocese at last made themselves effectively heard. There may have been other reasons for his rather hasty departure in dark December days. The doctors may have advised country air as a help towards shaking off an almost chronic state of fever. Or possibly, after so long an absence from Court, his place in the royal favour may have seemed less secure, and he was not rich enough to buy influential friends. Or Henry, who liked men to do their duty, may have given a hint too plain to be neglected.

In any case, having borrowed four horses and a coachman, the Bishop of Luçon left Paris behind him, and started on his long unpleasant journey to the dreary marshes of Lower Poitou.

CHAPTER II

1608—1610

Richelieu arrives at Luçon—His palace and household—His work in the diocese—His friends and neighbours.

WHILE his coach rumbled and jolted through miry ways towards the south-west, Armand de Richelieu had time to consider what he had done and hoped to do. The objects of his ambition were always the same: political power and the command of men. His career might seem to have met with a sharp check in these long months of illness, followed by banishment to remote wilds, so far from the sources of light and of favour, Paris and the King. But if he felt this, he was not the man to be seriously disheartened.

A diocese, after all, is not a bad school for governing one's fellow-creatures. Some of Richelieu's biographers think that he deliberately took up the work of a resident bishop with the idea of gaining experience for the larger career on which his heart was set: some, that in his state of chronic poverty he found the provinces a more honourable abode than the capital. In any case, he threw himself with eager energy into work which was difficult enough; the province of Poitou, and especially Lower Poitou, being desolated and devoured by war and by taxes, torn to pieces by schism, unhealthy, dismal, neglected, its old traditions, both of Church and State, fallen into ruin and forgetfulness. And Luçon itself, with its fine old cathedral lifted proudly and sadly above the mouldy roofs of the *bourg*, neither town nor village, seemed to lie at the other end of the world, near upon the sea, beyond leagues of

wide wet marsh scattered with miserable little farms and cottages and crossed by half-drained roads and stagnant canals, the few wretched peasants shivering with fever.

The occasional visits of Jacques du Plessis de Richelieu, who had now been dead sixteen years, were Luçon's latest experience of episcopal care. Certainly the diocese owed nothing to the Richelieu family, which had swallowed its revenues and let its cathedral tumble down; but with a touching faith in the future not unjustified, it offered a hearty welcome to young Armand de Richelieu. He entered his territory at Fontenay-le-Comte, a cheerful little town which prided itself, like the rest of Poitou, on having produced many great men. The Bishop was received here, not only by the inhabitants, but by a deputation from the Chapter of Luçon, and they harangued each other with various flattering remarks. But through the formalities of the time there pierces that clear decided meaning which is never absent from any utterance of Richelieu's, even as a young man of three-and-twenty. His speeches were never written for him. There were anger and injury in the minds of the Luçon Chapter, and he knew it. "I am not happy enough," he said, "to have all your hearts." But now that he and they were to live together, things would be very different. They would learn to know him, and to wish him well. For his part, he was ready to forget the past, highly esteeming the law which the ancients called "amnistie d'oubliance." Possibly there was a wry face here and there among the old canons at this touch of generosity, and it was not very long, in fact, before they began to quarrel with their new Bishop; but he had brought with him from Paris the fame of a preacher and a theologian, and the dull little town was *en fête* on that saint's day in December when Richelieu first said mass and preached in his own cathedral.

All, indeed, seemed peace and harmony. Even the Protestants, who were rather numerous in the diocese and in all that part of France, had a friendly word from the new Bishop on his arrival. One of the speeches which

has been preserved was addressed to the crowd in the street. After telling them how much he valued their joyful faces and cries of welcome, he added, "I know there are those in this company who are divided from us as to belief; in spite of which, I hope we may be united in affection, and I will do all that is possible to bring this to pass."

Here one seems to see the germ of that idea of religious toleration which influenced Richelieu's policy in later years. If he could persuade the Huguenots to be "Frenchmen first and Protestants afterwards," he was always willing to give them liberty of worship. If he crushed them, it was because they were a fighting faction which endangered, in his view, the unity of France and the power of the monarchy.

From his dilapidated palace, the heavy old buildings of which leaned up against cathedral walls battered by wars and by weather, Richelieu wrote in the spring of 1609 to a certain Madame de Bourges, who lived in Paris, in the Rue des Blanc-manteaux, near the newly fashionable Place Royale. This lady seems to have been a friend of his mother's family, and to have been married to one of a succession of distinguished physicians who practised in Paris during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. She was certainly an obliging person. Possibly her husband or son had attended the young Bishop in his four months' illness.

He begins his letter by thanking Madame de Bourges for a million kindnesses, and especially for some ecclesiastical vestments she had sent him. He found himself badly off for many necessary ornaments, former bishops of Luçon having left little behind them. And no wonder: they had not made it their residence for sixty years, we are told, and fighting Huguenots had stormed and devastated the place.

". . . I am now in my barony," he writes, "beloved of everybody, so they tell me, and I can only repeat it; but you know all beginnings are good. I shall have no lack of occupation here, I assure you, for everything is in such

ruins that repairing will be hard work. I am extremely ill-lodged, for I have no fire anywhere, because of the smoke . . . no remedy but patience. I assure you that I have the most horrid bishopric in France, the most muddy and the most disagreeable. . . . There is no place to walk, no garden, no alley, no anything, so that I am imprisoned in my house. . . ."

He is immensely interested in his furniture and his household, showing in these young days all the taste for careful detail, all the love of magnificence and show, which was to characterise the great Minister, the man with millions to spend where a poor little Bishop of Luçon had only hundreds.

He tells Madame de Bourges, of whose kind and active interest he seems very sure, that he has bought the velvet bed belonging to his aunt, Madame de Marconnay. He has also come into possession of a stately bed with hangings of silk and gold, which belonged to his great-uncle, "deffunct M. de Luçon." This style is out of fashion, apparently, for he asks advice and help as to arranging the episcopal bed with Bergamesque tapestry. A little later, he concludes that even a beggar like himself must entertain his neighbours with a noble air, so that the country may esteem him "un grand monsieur." He will therefore be obliged to Madame de Bourges if she will let him know the cost of two dozen silver plates "de belle grandeur." He hopes to get them for five hundred crowns, but seems pretty sure that his kind friend will make up any deficiency: "I know that for the sake of a hundred crowns you would not let me have anything mean."

In return for all these services the Bishop was expected to interest himself in finding a husband for Madame de Bourges' daughter Magdeleine. The task was not easy: he assures his correspondent that there is not a gentleman in the country possessing either money or goods. "Nous sommes tous gueux en ce pays, et moi le premier," he says with a light-hearted air.

From the first he was very fortunate in his servants, several of whom came to him at this time and stayed with

him all his life. One of these was his *maître d'hôtel*, a young man named La Brosse, who had been in the service of the late Duc de Montpensier. La Brosse ordered everything in the household, knew how the Bishop's guests should be entertained, and troubled him with nothing but accounts. This was well, for the work of the diocese, once undertaken, was enough to occupy both thought and time.

The destitution of the flock was twofold—bodily and spiritual. Richelieu's first care was to get his poor people relieved of some of the heavy burden of taxes which weighed them down. Under the system of those days, France was divided into *pays d'états* and *pays d'élection*. The *pays d'états*—chiefly provinces which had been originally independent of the crown of France—were taxed by their own representative Estates, sitting at the principal town. The *pays d'élection* were assessed by crown officials, who farmed out the taxes to local companies; and among the provinces thus farmed was that of Poitou.

The system meant local greed, dishonesty and oppression; the small townspeople of such a place as Luçon and the country-folk of its poverty-stricken neighbourhood had no redress from the tax-gatherers of Poitiers. The worst burden of all was the direct tax known as *la taille*. A man paid this on all his possessions in money and kind, and it always amounted to a quarter of his property, sometimes to a great deal more. The clergy and nobles were exempt from *la taille*, which crushed the poor peasants and the smaller people to the earth.

In later years, Louis XIII.'s Minister was ready enough to tax these suffering millions for the sake of absolutism and glory; but the young Bishop of Luçon, not yet hardened by power, touched by the piteous sight of thin hands worn by toil, the bread snatched from them by those who made an unfair living out of the taxes, wrote to head-quarters at Poitiers more than one letter of strong remonstrance, letters in which a warm indignation pierces through the studied courtesy of the words.

He writes of "the misery of the place, the poverty of

the people, the excessive tax of the *taille* which they have paid till now. . . ." He begs that the load they have to bear may be lightened. He reminds the officials that their own town pays much less than it ought, and hints very plainly that unless things are voluntarily set right, he will call the higher powers of justice to his aid.

As one would naturally expect, the *traitants* of Poitiers, worthy forerunners of the farmers-general of a later century, took very little notice of the appeal or the veiled threat of M. de Luçon—a young fellow, a "new broom," who might as well mind his own ecclesiastical business and let the King's taxes alone. But he was as good as his word. Two months later he wrote to the Minister of Finance, the all-powerful Sully, to lay the grievances of his flock before him; the appeal being seconded by his courtier brother, Henry de Richelieu. Thus the Poitevin tax-gatherers had a taste of Richelieu's quality.

The spiritual needs of the diocese were quite as crying and as serious. Religious matters all over France were in a terrible state, and nowhere worse than in Bas-Poitou. "Error and vice were rampant," says a writer of the time. Where the Church was concerned, Christianity seemed extinct; and Huguenot zeal had died down into political discontent. Church property was misused, wasted on pensions to princes and courtiers; the bishops were worldly and non-resident, the monasteries were scandalously corrupt, and their revenues often in lay hands; the parish clergy were ignorant and poor, and the long civil wars had made havoc with the churches; many had been desecrated, put to profane uses, if not destroyed altogether. It was only forty or fifty years since the "Monk" Richelieu and men like him had stormed over Poitou, and the memory of his exploits was still green.

The consequence of all this was a state of morals and civilisation which has been described by Michelet—not without exaggeration, possibly—in his terrible chapters on witchcraft in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Dark and cruel superstitions haunting the God-forsaken villages; horrible Mumbo-Jumbo rites, relics of heathenism,

performed on lonely heaths or in the shadow of the forests; families in which black magic and sorcery were handed down from father to son, from mother to daughter—such were the discoveries lying in wait for any active bishop who visited his diocese in the year 1609.

Armand de Richelieu was such a bishop; and the horror of these early experiences may partly explain the Minister's terrible severity, many years later, towards Urbain Grandier, the unworthy priest who was accused of bewitching the Ursuline nuns of Loudun.

During his residence, from 1609, with intervals, to 1614, Richelieu threw all his young strength into the labour of civilising and christianising Bas-Poitou. Travelling into every corner of the province, he preached, confirmed, scolded, advised, converted. Great and small had to listen to his admonitions. His passion for order and discipline brought new and amazing experiences to a parish clergy which had lived as it listed, idle, drunken, immoral, in the happy delusion that no one would ever interfere. Richelieu interfered to some purpose.

One of his chief objects was to get the appointment of the curés into his own hands. Many livings—if they could be called so—were in the gift of private persons, subject to an episcopal consent which was never refused: others belonged to abbeys, and this often meant, in the end, the patronage of some prince or noble to whom the monastic revenues were paid. For instance, a hundred benefices in the diocese of Luçon alone, and many more elsewhere, belonged to the great Benedictine abbey of Saint-Michel-en-l'Ermitage, of which the Comte de Soissons, the King's cousin, was the titular abbot. There is little to be said in that prince's favour; he was a man of "mœurs infâmes"; but Richelieu, in later years his son's bitter and powerful enemy, had occasion to write M. le Comte a quite grovelling letter of thanks in 1609. He had made the Bishop his "vicar" with regard to all the clergy in the diocese of Luçon who depended on the Abbey of Saint-Michel.

Richelieu dealt with private patrons in a more plain-

spoken way. "One called André" having been preferred to a benefice by a great lady, Madame de Sainte-Croix, the Bishop flatly declined to allow so incapable a man "to lead a flock dear to Jesus Christ." Yet, with all his firmness, he was kind. If the patroness would set a good example to the diocese by placing her living among those to which, after careful examination, the Bishop undertook to appoint the best men, he was willing that André should try his powers with the rest. So strong, so wise and religious, are the arguments of the letter, that its result is not surprising. Madame de Sainte-Croix sent her presentation to the Bishop *en blanc.* Nobody knows what became of the unlucky André.

Richelieu was not satisfied with appointing his curés; he was determined to educate them. Here he was moved by the new spirit of the time, working so actively in the Jesuits, led by the King's confessor, Père Cotton, and no less in Pierre de Bérulle, the evangelist, who had just introduced into France the Congregation of the Oratory. His second house in France, for the express purpose of training men for the ministry, was established at Luçon during these years of Richelieu's residence. Bérulle, a man of old family and of most lovable character, was at this time an intimate friend and associate of the Bishop of Luçon. There came a day of estrangement and political enmity.

Richelieu's provincial life was by no means solitary. The young and sturdy Bishop of Poitiers, M. de la Rochepposay, son of a bold fighter of the League and worthy of his name, was a neighbour and friend of Poitevin origin; and attached to both cathedrals there were men of distinction, of theological science, burning with zeal not only for the advance of religion and the conversion of heretics, but for the honour and glory of the bishops they loyally served. One of the grand vicars of M. de Poitiers was no less a personage than Duvergier de Hauranne, afterwards known as the Jansenist Abbé de St. Cyran, the famous director of Port-Royal. One of the canons, afterwards dean, of Luçon was Sébastien

Bouthillier, Abbé de la Cochère, to whose devotion and cleverness, now and in later years, Richelieu owed much. These young men, with others like-minded, fought hard for the Catholic religion in their province of Poitou; preaching, teaching, holding disputations with Protestant ministers—a work in which the Bishop of Luçon, with his learning fresh from the Sorbonne, distinguished himself highly. They also had their "diversions" in common, which consisted in hard study, keen argument, and preparation for further spiritual conquests. As for real spirituality of mind, there is no doubt that Saint-Cyran, mystic, Augustinian, uncompromising, outstripped his companions as far on that path as Richelieu did on another —the path of political genius.

Luçon in its fever-haunted marshes did not keep the Bishop long. He lived much at Coussay, a priory and small château belonging to his family, in a more hilly and healthy part of his diocese not so far from Poitiers. He seems to have been happy here, away from his quarrelsome Chapter and near his friends: the traditions of Coussay, we are told, still preserve his memory; not as the great Cardinal, but as "prieur et châtelain" of that little village and domain. He was also a good deal at Les Roches, another priory he possessed between Chinon and Saumur, close to Fontevrault, in the north-west corner of his diocese. Here he was very near his old home, Richelieu, where his mother, aunt, and younger sister were still living, the fierce old Rochechouart grandmother having been some years dead.

At Les Roches, it seems, began the famous and life-long friendship between Armand de Richelieu and François Le Clerc, Marquis du Tremblay, now a man of two-and-thirty, thin, red-haired, deeply marked with the small-pox, who had already made his name as Père Joseph, a Capuchin monk of extraordinary talent and energy. The future *Éminence grise* was Angevin by birth, had been a soldier, but at twenty-two had thrown himself passionately into "religion." Before Richelieu came to Luçon, Père Joseph was carrying on a valiant conflict of eloquence,

persuasion and violence combined, with the Protestants throughout these western quarters, many of whom were considerable by descent and actual power. Père Joseph was attracted by difficulty. Whatever the truth about his after life may be—history tells contrary tales—there is no doubt that at this time he was an ardent reformer in his own sense of the word and a man of deep personal religion. It was owing to him, and to his friend the Abbess of Fontevrault, Eléonore de Bourbon, aunt of Henry IV., that a Capuchin convent was established at Saumur in the teeth of the Protestant governor, Du Plessis-Mornay. From this convent and others, notably Fontenay, in the diocese of Luçon, Lent preachers were sent out into all parts. Richelieu welcomed them with "extreme joy." But it was not till a year or two later, after King Henry's death, when his views and hopes were fast extending beyond diocesan limits, that he and Père Joseph found themselves working together in the difficult and complicated affairs of the Abbey of Fontevrault.

CHAPTER III

1610—1611

"Instructions et Maximes"—The death of Henry IV.—The difficult road to favour—Père Joseph and the Abbey of Fontevrault.

IF some of those who were privileged to watch, with short-sighted eyes, Richelieu's apostolic work in the diocese of Luçon, could have read his thoughts and sometimes looked over his shoulder, they might have been somewhat startled. Probably his contemporaries knew nothing of certain rapidly scrawled sheets in the Cardinal's familiar writing, which were discovered by M. Armand Baschet among the old manuscripts of the Bibliothèque Nationale, about thirty years ago. The sheets are headed, "Instructions et Maximes que je me suis donné pour me conduire à la Cour." At first the date was a little disputed; but internal evidence seems to show that Richelieu wrote these pages of notes in the winter of 1609, or early in 1610, when at the background of his thoughts, apparently all busy with evangelising Bas-Poitou, the desire for public life and power was waxing stronger every day. It was not likely indeed that such a young race-horse, keen, nervous, swift and delicate in body and brain, would long be contented to plough the heavy wastes of the muddiest diocese in France.

In his hours of solitude he dreamed of King and Court, and planned every detail of behaviour that might please the great Henry. From an eastern window, one may fancy, he gazed over the wide plains towards Paris, his Jerusalem, the real centre of his worship, the goal of that flaming ambition which, with him, largely usurped the

place of all other passions. Then he wrote down his dreams, so clear, so businesslike, so full of prudence and self-control, that they could hardly fail to come true. It would have been amazing if the genius that so vividly pointed him the way had not led him to the height of his desires.

It seems worth while to give a few extracts from this curious *Mémoire* for the sake of the light it throws on Richelieu's mind. He changed very little until absolute power made careful personal observation and dissimulation unnecessary.

Through all his pages there is only one mention of God or of religion; with this his first paragraph abruptly begins.

"There is so much licence and there are so many kinds of diversions, that if one does not give to God the first thoughts and the first hours of the day, it is hard, amid company and business, to serve Him at all . . . I will therefore choose a lodging which is not far either from God or from the King."

He thinks it is hardly advisable to make a point of waiting on the King every day. That is all very well for courtiers who have nothing else to do.

". . . But in the first days after my arrival at Court, I shall present myself every day until he has been pleased to speak or to listen to me . . . after which it will be enough to appear in Paris once a week and at Fontainebleau every third day. . . . If one presents one's self merely to see the King, one must stand within sight when he is at table; if to speak to him, one must draw near to his chair. Take care to stay discourse when the King drinks.

"The words most agreeable to the King are those which exalt his royal virtues. He likes keen points and sudden repartees. He prefers those who speak boldly—but with respect. It is well to fall back constantly on the cadence that by ill luck one has been able to do him service only in small matters, and that there is nothing too great or impossible to be done, with good will, for so good a master and so great a king.

"It is important to notice which way the wind blows, and not to take him in a humour when he cares to speak to no one and kicks against everybody.

"As to other great men, one must visit them . . . remembering that sacrifices are paid both to the harmful and the favourable gods. . . . The best time is the morning, in order to accompany them when they go out, and I think this the most honourable. Some choose the time when they return for dinner, and run the risk of being sent off without a word."

He speaks scornfully of the "strange servitude" endured by those who "follow tables" day by day, wasting hours in search of a dinner.

". . . At table, if one must talk, one should take care that the discourse is of indifferent matters; history; descriptions of countries; towns; powerful families; laws and customs. Questions of State, commerce, astrology, fortification, music and other science . . . without pedantry, and without showing too curiously what one knows.

"And because in these conversations one learns more than by reading the best books . . . they should be carefully noted down in a book, of which every page should be marked with some significant word or name."

M. Baschet, and other students of Richelieu's manuscripts, have noticed how curiously these words foreshadow the habit of his whole life—to write everything down, "maxims, reflexions, facts," for correct remembrance and future use.

He dwells much on the need of discretion in dealing with the great, their sayings and doings, and on the serious peril that lies in pleading for one's friends, so often malcontent and unreasonable. But he will not, he says, follow in the path of those who promise and do not perform.

As to more personal caution: "Turn away the ear from those who would tell of other people's business, and never repeat what they say, still less what they do."

This was hardly the favourite maxim in after life of the man who employed more spies than any one else in history.

Letters to friends he finds perilous, having had experience of the same.

"In letters written to friends one must take care that there is nothing to injure either him who writes or him who receives, for these are occasions much spied upon and desired by enemies, and which bring about repentance and confusion. As to that, I remember what I wrote on the execution of the Maréchal de Biron, whereof the King spoke to me, and after His Majesty Monsieur de Villeroy. . .

"In letters of compliment which may be shown, I shall write no new thing and no opinion except as to common things which may be published without peril. . . . I shall keep a copy of important letters. . . . Writing to the same person several letters in one packet, I shall mark by number those first to be read. . . . I shall reply to all those who write to me, and shall forget nothing which should be considered either in their quality or their discourse. No one, not even a Knight of the Order, should be dispensed from answering a letter from one greatly his inferior. . . . One should read letters more than once before answering them. . . . Letters of importance, carefully kept, serve more purposes than one thinks when one receives them. . . . The fire should keep those which the casket cannot keep with safety. . . . I shall carefully cultivate the acquaintance and friendship of one or two Commissioners of the Post, in order that letters may be more faithfully delivered and forwarded with care and diligence. . . ."

So much for correspondence. The later notes deal with a courtier's most difficult study, dissimulation, and here, as elsewhere, it strikes one how large a part of Richelieu's commanding genius lay in "an infinite capacity for taking pains." His advice to himself is mostly—"Silence."

"Not to publish abroad what has been said in confidence: Not to divulge any affair that may cause scandal: Not to discover one's own plans, which being discovered may fail: Not to show that we are aware of the faults and the bad actions of others, because men with these faults hate those who know them: Not to show that we perceive the ill-will men bear to ourselves or to those whom we

love: Not to show that we know any harm men have done us, or that we feel ourselves offended: Not to run any risk of brawls and quarrels. . . . To all these ends, silence is necessary and is not reprehensible. And though it may be very hard to live with one's friends in this manner and to be silent as to their affairs, nevertheless reason teaches us to fix our eyes on what signifies most, and to do no harm or prejudice to ourselves."

Here, a thought of sinning against truth and sincerity seems to have troubled the Bishop a little, for he ends by trying to explain how a man may with difficulty steer between two risks, "the reproach of lying and the peril of truth." His counsel is, "Make a timely and cautious retreat without downright falsehood, saying nothing that ought not to be said." Finally, "Be very reserved in words and in writing, and neither say nor write what is not absolutely necessary."

Altogether a severe set of rules to be followed by a fiery, proud and impatient nature.

Imagination, of course, should not be allowed to play with history: but considering that the exact date of Richelieu's "Instructions et Maximes" is not and never can be known, one may venture to fancy that he laid down his pen on a certain day in May 1610, just as the post from Paris had clattered into his courtyard, bringing crushing news for France and for himself. Henry, "un si bon maître et si grand Roy," had been stabbed to death by the fanatic hand of Ravaillac, leaving his country in the hands of a weak woman just crowned, a melancholy little boy, and a group of princes and great nobles, greedy of money and power.

We have the very letter in which this news came to Richelieu. His faithful Sébastien Bouthillier was in Paris at the time, and wrote to him immediately after the tragic event. He had intended, he said, to send him an account of the Queen's coronation; but had been interrupted by "the most strange and fatal accident."

"On Friday, the 14th, His Majesty had gone to the Rue Saint-Denis to see the preparations for the Queen's

entry, and, returning, was in the street called de la Ferronnerie, when a wicked man, or rather the most execrable monster on earth, climbed on the hinder part of the coach inside which His Majesty was, and, unrestrained by the respect and fear due to the Lord's anointed and the greatest prince in the world, attacking him from behind whose face brought terror to his enemies and assurance to all his subjects, gave him two blows with a knife, of which the first was not mortal, although both went through the body. When the report ran through Paris that the King was dead, you cannot imagine, Sir, the grief of all the people, the amazement of the nobles, every one sad and cast down; and yet, in the midst of this general sadness, it was courageously resolved to establish the Queen as regent, so that, three hours after the catastrophe, the King having expired, the Court of Parliament assembled at the Augustins, M. le Prince de Conti, MM. de Guise, d'Épernon, de Montbazon and many others being present, and verified the letters patent of the Regency which the late King had caused to be made out."

The Abbé goes on to describe the sorrowful and loyal reception of the young Louis XIII., on Saturday, at the Palais de Justice, and then adds what he knows will interest his Bishop more than any other Parisian news he can send him at the moment.

"I must tell you that M. le Cardinal du Perron shows on all occasions the esteem in which he holds you; for I hear that when there was talk a few months ago, in his presence, of the young prelates of France, and when some one spoke of you in terms of praise, according to the reputation you have gained, M. le Cardinal said that you should not be counted among the young prelates, that the oldest ought to give way to you, and that for his own part he was ready to be an example to the rest. M. de Richelieu, to whom this was said, repeated it to me in so many words."

This penetrating Cardinal du Perron, Archbishop of Sens, was one of the loftiest ecclesiastical figures of the time. Theologian and politician, he had been Richelieu's

chief patron in Paris, and his words, as Sébastien Bouthillier very well knew, were not a mere piece of flattery addressed to Richelieu's brother.

Though the terror and excitement in Paris were much greater than Bouthillier reported, France, as a whole, seems to have kept its head at this tragical time, the provinces remaining quiet. This may have been due to the fact that the news, as it travelled down with rolling wheels, galloping hoofs, running feet, into the depths of the country, caused more grief than surprise. It had long been prophesied that Henry would die a violent death, and such prophecies, no doubt, sometimes bring their own fulfilment. For the last four or five years, every natural marvel or disaster had been counted as an evil omen for the King. "Heaven and earth," says Péréfixe, "had given only too many prognostications of what happened to him. A very great eclipse of the sun, which came to pass in the year 1608; a terrible comet, which appeared in the preceding year; quakings of the earth; monstrous births in divers parts of France; a rain of blood, which fell in several places; a great plague, which afflicted Paris in the year 1606; apparitions of phantoms, and many other prodigies, held men in dread of some horrible event."

The King's death was actually reported in Italy, Spain, and even Flanders, some time before it took place; written predictions were found in churches, and bells tolled of themselves; women, especially nuns, had frightful dreams and visions of murder; it was even known that Ravaillac, the melancholy madman of the Angoumois, was consulting his conscience as to whether a King who contemplated war with Catholic Spain ought to live or die. This tale reached the Queen, through an unlucky woman, the Dame d'Escoman, whose reward for having meddled in the matter was imprisonment for life. That Marie de Médicis, supported by her Concini favourites, secretly wished and plotted for Henry's death, is probably one of the most cruel slanders ever invented by the enemies of a queen.

The prophecies and portents were not unknown to

the King, and although he was certainly neither timid nor credulous, they depressed his gay spirit. During those last months he appeared, says Péréfixe, "as if he were condemned to death." A heavy presentiment weighed upon him. He dreaded the Queen's coronation—"ce maudit sacre"—and told Sully that he knew he would die in a coach. Indeed he, so daring in war, had long been curiously nervous when driving in the Paris streets; and on the fatal day, though he wished to visit the Arsenal, where his friend and Minister lay ill, he doubted and hesitated before leaving the Louvre. "Shall I go? Shall I not go?" he said several times to the Queen. Alarmed at his strange dejection, Marie begged him to stay; but he kissed her affectionately, bade her adieu, and went straight to his death in the Rue de la Ferronnerie.

Thus the Bishop of Luçon was deprived of the royal patron from whom he had hoped so much. But he seems to have wasted very little time in mourning his own and the country's loss. His first thought was to bring himself before the Queen, to gain a footing in the new Court, different in many ways from the old. And this did not appear to be a difficult task for a young and quick-witted man. The day of old men, old soldiers, old courtiers and friends of "le Béarnais," was over.

The Bishop of Luçon had already friends and supporters in the Regent's intimate circle. His brother and brother-in-law, Henry de Richelieu and René de Vignerot, Seigneur du Pont-de-Courlay, were among her most favoured courtiers. The Marquise de Guercheville, her lady of honour, accustomed to courts since the days of Catherine de Médicis, was a connection on the Du Plessis side; and two at least of the young maids of honour bore familiar family names—Pont-de-Courlay, Meilleraye. At this time, too, the Père de Bérulle, Richelieu's personal friend, had great influence with the Queen, and the same might be said of the Père Cotton, the late King's confessor. The Jesuits did not yet regard Richelieu as an enemy.

It was not till after long delays, however, that the Bishop of Luçon reached the Queen-Regent's distinguished

favour and the front of affairs. His first step was a hurried and an unlucky one. On the 22nd of May he wrote out a curious document, a kind of oath of allegiance and declaration of loyalty to the young King and his mother, from himself as Bishop and Baron, his dean, canons, and clergy. He sent this paper to his brother in Paris, begging him to deliver it into the Queen's own hands. Henry de Richelieu's worldly wisdom at once refused this favour. Such zeal was quite out of place, he said: *Cela ne se fait pas*: nobody else in the kingdom had done anything of the sort, and he, an experienced courtier, would not allow his forward brother to push himself by such means. Bouthillier was employed to send this discouraging reply to the Bishop, whose restless eagerness it hardly served to check.

It convinced him, indeed, that nothing was to be done from a distance, and that the best of relations and friends would not help a man who was not on the spot to help himself. Early in June we find him writing to Madame de Bourges about a permanent lodging in Paris. As he intends to spend some time there every year, he wants advice as to situation and cost, also as to furniture, tapestry, plate, wine, etc. Poor as ever in purse, he is no less determined to make a good show in the capital: "C'est grande pitié que de pauvre noblesse, mais il n'y a remède: contre fortune bon cœur."

He went to Paris, and remained there for some months; but it was an unhappy and a disappointing visit. During these early days of her regency, Marie de Médicis had neither power nor leisure to make new friends. Concini, Maréchal d'Ancre, and his wife Leonora, reigned at the Louvre, though hardly yet outside it. The peace of the kingdom, according to Richelieu's own *Memoirs*, depended on the princes—Condé, Soissons, d'Épernon, Guise, and their like. In these first months they kept it unbroken, and all, Parliament, nobles, statesmen, churchmen, municipalities, governors of provinces, were ready "to serve the King under the guidance of the Queen." The Huguenots were pacified, for the moment, by the renewal of the Edict

of Nantes. But the "grands de la cour" did not give their allegiance for nothing. Henry's old Ministers, holding on to power with many searchings of heart, were forced to consent to the enormous bribes demanded by everybody. These "gratifications extraordinaires" were scattered with open hand among greedy nobles and courtiers, and, added to the Queen's own personal extravagance, were likely soon to empty Henry's precious coffers, so painfully filled. As to the Duc de Sully, whose rough temper, bad manners and comparative honesty had long made him unpopular at Court, a conspiracy among the nobles forced on his retirement in the winter of 1610. All these warring interests and anxieties, with visits from special foreign embassies, with the young King's coronation at Rheims, with the question of war or peace beyond the frontiers, made a social whirlpool of Paris and the Court.

The young provincial Bishop, without money or claims, whose few personal friends were naturally more interested in their own affairs than in his, found himself left behind in the race for power and fortune. His old enemy, fever, seized on him again and laid him low: Paris proved more unhealthy than even the marshes of Luçon. Terribly depressed by illness, he was irritated and annoyed by letters from his Cathedral chapter, complaining of disorders in the diocese, and he wrote sharply in answer, following his letters early in the year 1611. There was no advantage to be gained by staying in Paris, neglected and obscure.

Through all the first half of this year, Richelieu was in a Slough of Despond both mental and physical, brooding over difficulties and disappointments, and constantly ill with fever. It seems that in these dark days Père Joseph was his good angel.

The clever Capuchin had a troublesome affair on hand: the management of a woman who, though "illustre religieuse et grande servante de Dieu," was resolved to follow her own way and not that which director, Pope and King had marked out for her. Père Joseph was a crusader by nature, and a reformer to the backbone, with a fiery obstinacy and positive, autocratic will. He had

already reformed several convents in Poitou, in which the civil war, the invasion of an outside world, had strangely travestied the religious life. Some of these convents belonged to the great Benedictine Order of Fontevrault; and even in the Mother House itself, under the gentle and charitable guidance of Madame Eléonore de Bourbon, the strictness of the old Rule was half forgotten.

Madame Antoinette d'Orléans, of the Longueville family, the young widow of the Marquis de Belle-Isle, had become a nun at Toulouse, at a convent of the Feuillantines, and asked nothing better than to spend her remaining days there. But she was known to Père Joseph as a woman like-minded with himself, an enthusiast and a saint; and when, in 1604, a bull of Pope Paul V. appointed her Coadjutrix of her aunt the Abbess of Fontevrault, the young reformer welcomed her as an ally in his work. And as far as outside convents were concerned, she did not disappoint him. But though she loyally helped and supported the old Abbess in the government of the Order, her heart was never at Fontevrault. Her religious ideals were totally different from those of the two hundred or more Sisters who marched with such stately dignity through the venerable cloisters and took their high place in the choir where Plantagenets slept. Their rich possessions, their amusements—innocent enough, for Fontevrault, owing to the character of its long and regal line of abbesses, was never seriously touched by scandal; their little parties and cabals and gossip—good women, simple in faith and practice, but not lofty-minded or mystical: all this fell far below the standard of Madame d'Orléans, and her one desire was to escape from her dignity, to return to her "dear solitude." As she had never formally accepted the office of Coadjutrix, with the prospect of succession, this did not seem impossible.

The difficulty was that Père Joseph would not let her go. In her authority and influence he saw the only means by which the reform of the great Abbey might be carried through. There were divisions in the community; some of the nuns being ready to welcome a change, others

strongly opposed to it. Père Joseph and Madame de Bourbon both saw that no unanimity was to be hoped for, as long as the future was known to be uncertain.

Père Joseph took the matter into his own hands, and settled it by a *coup d'état*, secret and sudden. After a private consultation with the King in Council, he wrote to the Pope; and Paul V., convinced by his arguments, commanded Madame d'Orléans, under pain of excommunication, to accept her office immediately with all the duties it involved, and to assume the government of the Order, with the certainty of succeeding her aunt as Abbess of Fontevrault.

The command fell on Madame d'Orléans like a thunderbolt, but she could only obey. The consequence was what Père Joseph had desired and foreseen. The new ruler, once forced to rule, advanced "à pas de géant" in the appointed way. In one short week Fontevrault was reformed; every one of the nuns accepting the inevitable, all giving up their worldly indulgences, and returning to the old strict regulation of work and prayer.

This happy state of things went on for two years, and Père Joseph, seeing his reformation well at work, was occupied with his other duties as a director of souls—especially of that of the Duchesse de Montpensier, living retired at Champigny and mourning both her husband and her father, the Capuchin Duc de Joyeuse, who did not long survive his son-in-law—when Madame d'Orléans played him the same trick he had played her. She wrote secretly to the Pope, imploring him to have compassion on her trouble of mind, explaining how seriously her "tumultuous occupations" interfered with her personal sanctification, and praying him to withdraw his command that she should succeed Madame de Bourbon and to allow her, on her aunt's death, to return to her beloved Feuillantines of Toulouse. She begged His Holiness to inquire into the matter through commissaries of his own, without consulting Père Joseph. The Pope did as she wished, and she received full liberty to go where she pleased. Then she sent for Père Joseph and told him all,

on condition that nothing should be said to Madame de Bourbon. The old Abbess was to die in peace, imagining that her Coadjutrix would succeed her.

Père Joseph needed all his prudence and self-control, says his biographer, to hide his vexation at being thus "joué par une Princesse."

But the thing was done, and he made the best of it, secretly hoping that, "women being naturally inconstant," the joy of supreme authority might yet induce Madame d'Orléans to change her mind.

On March 26, 1611, at the age of seventy-eight, Madame Eléonore de Bourbon died. To all appearance, her Coadjutrix was ready to accept the succession. She even seemed to listen with favour to the persuasions of Père Joseph, who pointed out in glowing terms her duty to the Order. It was near the end of Lent, and Madame d'Orléans held her peace until after the Festival of Easter. On Low Sunday, having assembled the Community, she announced to them that she was about to write to the King and the Queen Regent, praying them to nominate an abbess in her stead.

This was a heavy blow to Père Joseph, and the affair was complicated by his knowledge of the fact that Madame d'Orléans did not now wish to return to Toulouse, but dreamed of founding a new convent in the province of Poitou, where the religious life, as she understood it, would be lived in all devotion and austerity.

Père Joseph, who with all his cleverness and strength had an attractive modesty, felt himself unequal to dealing alone with this reverend lady, and with the discord and confusion she had caused at Fontevrault. This, at least, was the reason he gave for his appeal to the Bishop of Luçon, "whose superior and transcendent genius had enchanted him," and who happened to be residing very near Fontevrault, at his Priory of Les Roches.

The Abbey of Fontevrault was quite independent of episcopal authority, and it was only as representing the Pope or the King that any bishop had the right to enter it. Père Joseph appealed to Richelieu as a friend; and,

judging from his lifelong devotion, it may be imagined that he joyfully seized this opportunity of rousing the Bishop from the state of fever-stricken depression in which he had returned from Paris. Here, if ever, was a case of a man's "sharpening the countenance of his friend." The dying flame was blown into life; hope took suddenly the place of something very like despair. The Capuchin discussed his difficulties with the Bishop, and they agreed that the whole question must be laid before the Queen Regent. Therefore they travelled together to Fontainebleau, where the Court was staying, amid all the enchantment of its exquisite spring.

Marie de Médicis, at this time, was far from happy. A year had passed since Henry's death; and to a woman both lazy and power-loving, the quarrels, ambitions, jealousies, of the princes and courtiers, each day harder to satisfy, were a constant torment; matters not being improved by the insolent pride of Concini, who posed as the equal of them all. The envoys from Poitou, asking nothing for themselves—no one dreamed that these two men, one ugly, grave, humble in appearance, the other delicate, worn, exhausted, would one day rule France and influence Europe—were graciously received by the Queen; and it appears that Père Joseph, in a few moments of private conversation after the Fontevrault business had been explained, spoke to her of his companion in terms of enthusiastic praise, as "a man of sublime genius and extraordinary merit, capable of the highest employments." The words remained in the Queen's mind and bore fruit, though not immediately.

The Bishop and the friar returned to Fontevrault, bearing the royal permission for the community to choose an abbess among themselves; but in the presence and with the consent of the Bishop of Luçon and Père Joseph. The solemn election took place in the summer, when the Grand Prioress, Madame Louise de Lavedan de Bourbon, was naturally chosen.

Madame Antoinette d'Orléans retired to Lencloître, a half-ruined convent of the Order near Poitiers, and was

there joined by many nuns from all parts of France, and even from Fontevrault itself, who desired to lead a stricter life under her guidance. It was not long before she founded, with the help and approval of Père Joseph and the Bishops of Luçon and Poitiers, a congregation known as *Les Filles du Calvaire*, independent of Fontevrault, the object of which was the practice of the Rule of St. Benedict in all its austere purity.

Pushed constantly to the front by Père Joseph, and with no unwillingness on his own part, the Bishop of Luçon added much to his reputation by his conduct of these affairs; State affairs, they might almost be called, considering the rank of those concerned and the wealth and political importance of the great Order of Fontevrault.

CHAPTER IV

1611—1615

Waiting for an opportunity—Political unrest—The States-General of 1614—The Bishop of Luçon speaks.

RICHELIEU worked hard in his diocese for the next three years, struggling all the while with ill-health and impatience. He went to Paris once during this time and offered his services to the powerful Concini, who received him graciously; but nothing more came of it. And the Queen was for the present inaccessible. Another disappointment was his failure to be elected as representative of his ecclesiastical province, Bordeaux, at a convocation of the clergy which was held in Paris in the early days of the Regency. On this occasion the Archbishop of Bordeaux, Cardinal de Sourdis—nicknamed *Sordido*—showed himself an enemy to the aspiring young man.

But no envious Metropolitan could keep Richelieu long in the background. He was becoming a very popular figure in the west country, of which Poitou and its learned capital were the centre. His private life appears to have been blameless. He kept up an affectionate intercourse with his own family. For his mother he was still "mon malade," from childhood a sickly, brilliant creature, a subject of uneasiness and pride. His sister, Madame du Pont-de-Courlay, turned to him for sympathy in a money loss or the death of a little child. He never lost sight of his brother Alphonse, the Carthusian, whose refusal had made him a bishop, and whom, in later years of power, he dragged from his cloister to be Archbishop and Cardinal.

He was a favourite with most of his neighbours, clerical and lay. His correspondence bears witness to the wideness of his acquaintance and interests, both public and private; people appealed to him as a friend, an arbitrator, and he never disappointed them. He was courteous, kind, even tender in his language: "episcopal and benign." He was on the politest terms with such of the great men as occasionally crossed his path: the Duc de Sully, governor of Poitou, now no longer a courtier and an absentee; the Duc de Villeroy, still in office, father of his friend M. d'Alincourt, and others of high rank and importance. His letters to such men as these, as well as to his more intimate friends, might have foreshadowed his coming greatness for those who had eyes to see. To the general company, however, the writer whose well-turned assurances and compliments had such a background of passionate ambition for his own and for his country's glory, was nothing but a clever phrase-maker, a young man of seven-and-twenty who could talk and argue, convert a few Protestants, deal discreetly with the wrangles of religious women. And outside a limited circle the name of Richelieu was probably unknown, except as that of a pensioned courtier of the Regency.

While the Bishop of Luçon waited for his opportunity, political and religious unrest was deepening in France. Henry IV.'s policy of opposition to the House of Austria and alliance with Savoy, Holland, and the German Protestants, had been set aside very early in the new reign, and two royal marriages were arranged to bind France closer to the Holy See and Catholic Europe. Louis XIII. was to be married to the Infanta Anna of Spain—known to history as Anne of Austria—and his eldest sister, Élisabeth, to the Infant of Spain, afterwards Philip IV. These marriages seem to have pleased nobody in France except the Regent, her immediate Court circle and her Ministers, whose only hope of keeping their place lay in her favour. The Foreign Secretary, Villeroy, the Chancellor, Brûlart de Sillery, the Connétable de Mont-

morency, were among the Queen's advisers in this affair. Most of the nobles, and especially the princes, were more or less in opposition; the strengthening of the Crown by so close an alliance with Spain did not suit their interests. Henry IV. himself, when the project was first laid before him by the Spanish Ambassador in 1610, had not listened encouragingly.

The Huguenot party was both displeased and alarmed. Assemblies were held at Nîmes, at Saumur, at La Rochelle; but the leaders, such as the Ducs de Bouillon and de Rohan—Sully's son-in-law—were not ready to proceed to civil war. Condé, at first throwing in his lot with them, soon went farther. He gathered troops in the west and threatened Poitiers, after publishing, with the other princes, a fierce manifesto against the Regent and her advisers. The young Bishop of Poitiers, Richelieu's friend, took matters with a high hand, closed the gates in the Queen's name, and prepared to defend the town against Condé, with the high approval of the future Abbé de St. Cyran, a worthy member, like himself, of the Church Militant. The Prince's bands overran Poitou, annoying the peaceable inhabitants, Madame de Richelieu among them, exacting large sums and quartering themselves in the villages.

In a fiery letter to M. de Neufbourg, an officer of Condé's ally, the Duc de Mayenne, the Bishop of Luçon expresses his amazement that his mother has been thought worthy of so little courtesy. "Be good enough," he says, "to exempt the parish of Saulnes, which belongs to Madame de Richelieu, from the lodging of troops and the contributions they demand. I would have written direct to him (M. de Mayenne) had not his treatment of my mother made me aware that he either believes me to be no longer of this world or that he deems me now and for ever incapable of doing him any service. Therefore I address myself to you. . . ."

Like his episcopal brother of Poitiers, Richelieu took his stand openly on the side of Royalty and against the horde of greedy nobles who caught at any pretext to add to their own possessions and power. It was not only

the political necessities of his later life that made him their enemy.

The flame of civil war soon died down. In May 1614 the Queen signed the treaty of St. Menehould, which pacified the princes, after some delay, by granting most of their desires. Condé, Nevers, Vendôme, Mayenne, Longueville, Bouillon and others received enormous pensions, as well as fortresses and governments; last, not least, the States-General were summoned, as the manifesto had demanded, to discuss the grievances of the three estates of the realm. The Huguenot party had already obtained some satisfaction. For the time, the Regent and her ministers had bought victory: the arrangements for the Spanish marriages went steadily on.

The Bishop of Luçon was directed by Sully, governor of Poitou, to supervise "with gentleness" the election in his diocese of deputies for the States-General. He did his duty, no doubt, in the matter; but the election that interested him was that of the diocese of Poitiers. There his friends were working for him. La Rocheposay, the warlike Bishop, his lieutenant Saint-Cyran, and Richelieu's faithful Bouthillier, smoothed the way for his uncontested election as one of the two deputies of the clergy of Poitiers. The old city, so lately in a stage of siege, rang joy-bells on August 10, the appointed day. All over Poitou, all over France, the bells were ringing, for every estate in the kingdom hoped much from the States-General. It may at once be said that rich and poor, great and small, were disappointed. What the bells rang in was not liberty, release from taxes, confirmation of rights, but the reign of Richelieu. And in consequence of that reign the voice of France in her States-General was not heard again for one hundred and seventy-five years—not until, in 1789, "the whirligig of Time brought in his revenges."

The States-General of 1614 were formally opened in Paris on Monday, October 27. On Sunday took place the customary procession from the great Convent of the Augustins on the left bank, along the quay, winding through narrow streets crowded with spectators and hung

with tapestry, to the bridge over the Seine which led most directly to the Cathedral of Notre Dame, where a solemn high mass was to be celebrated. It was a procession gay with colour and variety, although most of the clergy and all the Third Estate were in sober black. But the way was kept throughout by the royal guards, Swiss and French, in their varied liveries. Archers marched alongside, bearing immense tapers, faint flames quivering in the chilly air of the early autumn morning. Many of the deputies shivered, and complained of the cold.

It was a representative procession. The religious Orders, parish clergy, and trade corporations of Paris, the canons of Notre Dame, the doctors of the University—these led the way. Then came the hundred and ninety-two deputies of the *Tiers État*, walking four by four, with their distinguished President, Robert Miron, provost of the merchants. Then a hundred and thirty-two nobles in Court dress with swords. Then the clerical deputies, a hundred and forty, followed by the bishops and archbishops in purple and the cardinals in red. Then the Archbishop of Paris, bearing the sacred Host under a gorgeous canopy. Then the boy-King, walking in white, his mother in deep black, her young children, her attendant ladies and gentlemen; Queen Marguerite de Valois, the "aunt" of the Royal Family, and various other great ladies, princes, and nobles attached to the Court. After these followed the whole Parliament and the Municipality of Paris, with many officials and guards.

Like a wave of noise, colour and light, with its tramping feet and flickering candles, under the heavy clangour of the great bells, the procession rolls into Notre Dame, and the Cardinal-Archbishop of Bordeaux, Richelieu's hated Metropolitan, thunders out his sermon to the Estates of France: "Fear God. Honour the King."

The three Estates held their sittings in three of the vast rooms of the Convent of the Augustins, but the opening ceremony took place in the hall of the old Hôtel de Bourbon, east of the Louvre. There the little King, a

dark, solemn boy, whose majority, on entering his fourteenth year, had lately been celebrated, sat enthroned "on violet velvet, powdered with golden lilies." On his right were the two Queens, Marie and Marguerite, and the young Princess Élisabeth, the future Queen of Spain. His brother Gaston, a lively, pretty child of five, his little sisters Christine and Henriette Marie, sat on his left; a gorgeous ring of princes, courtiers and great ladies surrounded them. In theory, the body of the hall was kept for deputies; in fact, it was inconveniently crowded by Parisians, chiefly hangers-on of the Court. "Tout était plein de dames et de damoiselles, de gentilshommes et autre peuple," says Florimond Rapine, the chronicler. The deputies were indignant, and it was long before all could find places. Then the wild, ill-assorted assembly listened kindly to a few stammering words from Louis XIII., and impatiently to a long harangue from Chancellor Sillery, which committed the Government to nothing.

The ceremonies of opening and closing were very much the same. Three months of arguing and quarrelling, during which Paris was frequently in an uproar, the Prince de Condé claiming homage that nobody would pay, the Duc d'Épernon insulting the Parliament, gentlemen fighting in the streets, the Estates themselves divided into violent parties for and against the Pope and Spain, the Third Estate demanding the abolition of pensions and privileges, the nobles and clergy angrily defending their rights, brought the assembly once more together at the Hôtel de Bourbon, in the presence of the Court.

Manners had not improved. Two thousand of the baser sort of courtiers, men and women, with numbers of people of all kinds, had crowded into the best places. Rapine saw "cardinals, bishops, priors, abbots, the nobility and all the Third Estate, crowded and pushed without order, respect, or consideration, among the pikemen and halberdiers."

In the midst of this babel, the spokesmen of the three Orders had to present to the King their *cahiers*, containing the result of their stormy deliberations. First it was the

THE MAJORITY OF LOUIS XIII (LOUIS XIII AND MARIE DE MÉDICIS)

FROM THE PICTURE BY RUBENS IN THE LOUVRE

turn of the clergy; and their orator, chosen, like his fellows, by the influence of the Queen-Regent, was the Bishop of Luçon.

He had already gained much credit, during the debates of the last three months, for eloquence and judgment; he was one of the group of young and brilliant bishops who supported Cardinal du Perron, always his friend, in his efforts to bring the *Tiers État* into harmony with the views of the clergy. The burning question was an article resolved on by the *Tiers*, demanding that the King's complete independence of every power, spiritual or temporal, except God alone, should be made "a fundamental law of the State." It was the old Gallican, anti-Roman doctrine, which, as far as the middle classes of France were concerned, had been growing in strength for some years. It had fought the League; it opposed the Jesuits; it defied the authority of the Pope. It rose up in anger against the courtly politicians who now, with their Spanish alliances, were contradicting and nullifying the policy of Henry IV.

There were Gallicans among the clergy, but the majority were Ultramontane, equally loyal to the Pope and to the Queen-Regent's government. Cardinal du Perron and his distinguished phalanx wasted hours of eloquence—and the Cardinal was both a great orator and an attractive man—in persuading the *Tiers* to withdraw their obnoxious article. Matters were made worse by the Parliament of Paris, Gallican and anti-Spanish to the core, which openly supported the *Tiers*, as also did Condé and his followers and the Huguenot party under Bouillon.

Forty years later, Louis XIV.'s whip was to teach both nobles and Parliament the meaning of that divine right and absolute power which they were now eager to claim for their kings. On this occasion the article was referred to Louis XIII., and by his authority was expunged from the *cahier* of the *Tiers État.*

It was in a spirit of triumphant loyalty, therefore, both to his Order and to the King—or rather, to the Queen and her councillors—that Armand de Richelieu made the oration

which gained him his first real fame. He stood before the whole of France—all France that signified, for even the humble millions were represented, though mostly by men of law—slight and delicate, with a pleasant voice, an easy, graceful manner, eyes bright and clear, yet thoughtful, a mouth both strong and smiling under the thin moustache brushed sharply upwards, which always gave him the look of a soldier.

His discourse lasted an hour, and gave great satisfaction to all his hearers, who were struck by the discretion with which he touched on many difficult subjects "without offending anybody." It was indeed a delicate task, to complain of the treatment bestowed on the Church and her clergy by the chief authorities in the kingdom; to praise the clergy, their learning, probity and self-denial, and to claim for them a larger share in the management of State affairs; to point out the many abuses of lay patronage; to condemn the excesses of some Huguenots while declaring that no weapons but example, instruction and prayer should be used against those who, "if blinded by error," yet lived peaceably under the royal authority; to remonstrate against unfair taxation, corruption and bribery in high places; to demand the reduction of pensions and the abolition of duels, according to the laws of "the great Henry":—and in the same breath to praise the Queen-Regent for the great things she had already done in preserving "peace, repose and public tranquillity," chief of which was that "sacred bond of a double marriage" which was soon to unite "the greatest kingdoms of the world." In short, while performing the full duty prescribed by his Order, to make himself *persona grata* to Marie de Médicis, was a task worthy of Armand de Richelieu.

The Baron de Sénecé, spokesman of the nobles, followed the Bishop of Luçon, but had little to say. On the other hand Robert Miron, who spoke—on his knees—for the *Tiers État*, had a great deal. He drew a frightful picture of the "wounds and sorrows" of the poor people of France, their constant labour and heavy burdens. He

complained bitterly of the abuses in the Church, the privileges, oppressions, public and private violence of the nobles, the delays and the corruption of justice, the ravages of armed men.

"Without the labour of the poor people," he cried, "where were the tithes of the Church—the vast possessions of the nobility, their wide lands, their great fiefs—the houses, the incomes, the heritages of the Third Estate? And further, who gives your Majesty the means of keeping up the royal dignity, of providing for the necessary expenses of the State, within and without the kingdom? who gives the means of raising men for the wars, if not the labourer and the taxes he pays?" And he added those remarkable words: "It is to be feared that despair may teach the poor people that the soldier is but a peasant bearing arms, and that when the vinedresser takes up an arquebus, he may become hammer instead of anvil."

But Miron, like the other speakers, professed devoted loyalty to the King, only begging that the royal authority might interfere to protect the poor people. And Miron's harangue, like the others, had no real consequence whatever. Richelieu observes in his *Memoirs* that the States-General ended without advantage to anybody.

The deputies were dismissed, contumelious and discontented, and returned to the provinces freshly burdened by their expenses.

The Bishop of Luçon went back to his diocese; but his speech was printed by the famous Cramoisy. The Court consoled itself for a very tiresome winter by one of the most magnificent Mid-Lent ballets that Paris had ever seen.

CHAPTER V

1615—1616

Richelieu appointed Chaplain to Queen Anne—Discontent of the Parliament and the Princes—The Royal progress to the South—Treaty of Loudun—Return to Paris—Marie de Médicis and her favourites—The young King and Queen—The Duc de Luynes—Richelieu as negotiator and adviser—The death of Madame de Richelieu.

IN the autumn of the year 1615 Richelieu was appointed chaplain to the new young Queen of France, Anne of Austria. He owed this appointment partly to the impression made by his good looks and talent on Marie de Médicis, partly to the friendly intrigues of the Bishop of Bayonne—afterwards Archbishop of Tours, and an adorer of the beautiful Duchesse de Chevreuse. Owing to the troubled state of France and the long delay of the royal entry into Paris, he did not enter upon his duties till the late spring of 1616.

The easy triumph of the Court party over the rebel elements in the nation had not lasted long. When the Parliament of Paris saw that the States-General and all their talk had ended in nothing—no reform of abuses, no strengthening of the law, while Concini, the foreign favourite, now a Marshal of France and Lieutenant-General of Picardy, was fast becoming the most powerful person in the kingdom—it raised its voice in angry remonstrance. And the men of law did not stand alone. "Derrière le parlement," says M. Henri Martin, "il y avait les princes, et à côté des princes, les huguenots." In fact, a strong party was making a new and final struggle against the Spanish marriages. The voice of the English ambassador, Sir Thomas Edmunds, chimed in with those of Condé,

Bouillon and the Parliament, begging at least for delay: in the present state of Europe, James I. found these marriages "inopportune." His eldest daughter, Elizabeth, had lately married the Protestant Elector Palatine, nephew of the Duc de Bouillon and brought up by him. England was thus strongly linked with the Protestant cause, both in France and Germany.

But neither foreign opinion, Parliament, princes, nor cowardly counsels in her own household—for her favourite Leonora, Concini's wife, was against her in this matter—could turn Marie de Médicis from her intention. The King and the Ministers, under her orders, haughtily denied that the Parliament had any right to interfere in affairs of State. She tried, but in vain, to win over Condé and his friends. When her failure was plain—Condé retiring into the country, publishing a manifesto which demanded the delay of the marriages and the disgrace of Concini and the old Ministers, and following up his words by raising an armed force—she replied by arresting his friend Nicolas Le Jay, a president of the Parliament and leader of the opposition there. The guards seized him at five o'clock in the morning of August 17 and hurried him into a coach. On that same morning the whole Court, conducted by the Ducs de Guise and d'Épernon with a strong body of troops, set out on the long journey to the south. President Le Jay, sorely against his will, followed the King as far as Amboise, where he was left behind as a prisoner.

Concini—formerly Marquis, now also Maréchal d'Ancre—remained to oppose the princes in Picardy, of which the young Duc de Longueville was governor. The Maréchal de Bois-Dauphin (Montmorency-Laval, Marquis de Sablé) was left with a royal army of 12,000 men to protect and overawe Paris, already commanded by the guns of the Château de Vincennes, and to keep a check on the Prince de Condé.

The royal progress to the south was slow and dangerous, with many delays and annoyances. Travelling was not easy even in summer weather. The long train of coaches, baggage-waggons and pack-mules, horsemen,

running footmen, with the large military escort, took three days to travel the good road between Paris and Orléans, and then for some unknown reason, perhaps the uncertainty of Condé's movements, did not arrive at Tours for ten days more. Here the Court was met by three deputies from the Huguenot assembly at Grenoble, who had just missed His Majesty at Paris, and who, "with more insolence than formerly," says Richelieu, pressed again upon him the demands of the *Tiers État* and requested him to proceed no further on his journey, "in which they were interested, not only as being of *la Religion prétendue réformée*, but as good Frenchmen."

In consequence of this and other disloyal proceedings, the King publicly declared the Prince de Condé and all his adherents guilty of high treason unless they laid down their arms within a month, and sent his declaration to be registered by the Parliament of Paris.

The Court arrived at Poitiers on September 4, and was detained there, to the Queen-mother's great vexation, till the 27th. The little Madame of thirteen, on her way to be married to the Prince of Spain, had an attack of small-pox, and Marie herself suffered from an inflamed arm. As Condé was already fighting his way across country with the object of blocking the road to Spain, while the Duc de Rohan, with a small Huguenot army, was preparing to second him by occupying Guienne and the Bordelais, it appeared at one moment as if the royal marriages might be effectually stopped.

Two persons profited by the delay. One was the Maréchale d'Ancre. That mysterious Leonora, accused, probably falsely, of witchcraft and so many other crimes, seized this opportunity to creep back into the favour of her royal mistress and foster-sister, whom she, in concert with the Minister Villeroy and others, had seriously annoyed by advising her against pressing on the marriages. By devoted nursing of the royal invalids, and by the help of her Jewish doctor, Montalto, Leonora soon regained Marie's selfish affection, to lose it once more, and finally, before the end of her tragic life,

The other person who profited by the royal visit to Poitiers was the Bishop of Luçon. On returning from Paris in the spring, feverish and irritable, he had plunged deep in theological studies at his favourite Coussay. It seems to have been a grievance that even his friends should disturb him at his books. But when the Court arrived at Poitiers and was detained there, all loyal persons of any distinction in the province were bound to wait upon their Majesties. The Bishop of Luçon was among the foremost in paying his duty. Certain vague talk of the chaplaincy to Queen Anne now took solid shape, and he received the promise of his appointment, which was definitely made in November, when the Court was at Bordeaux. During the interval, it is evident that Richelieu considered himself bound to the Queen-mother's service. He made it his business to send a report of the health of Madame, who was left behind at Poitiers for a few days when the Court hurried forward; and his letters to Marie de Médicis are full of grateful devotion.

The little French princess was conveyed to the Spanish frontier, and the little Spanish princess was received in exchange. Under the escort of the Duc de Guise and six thousand men—for the Huguenots, under Rohan, made the journey perilous—she was brought to Bordeaux, where the King and his mother awaited her. There the marriage was finally blessed—it had already, in the case of both princesses, been celebrated by proxy—and there the Court lingered on till the middle of December, when it began its slow northward journey, not reaching Tours till January 25, 1616.

The country through which the Court travelled was in a terrible state, trampled and devastated by armies—"chose pitoyable et horrible," says Pontchartrain. In spite of the Maréchal de Bois-Dauphin, Condé had crossed the Loire at Neuvy and was storming westward through Berry, Touraine and Poitou, "pillant et saccageant," says Richelieu, "tous les lieux où il passoit." Again Madame de Richelieu had her share in the sufferings of the poor province, which seemed to her even worse off than in

the Wars of the League. Forty years she had lived at Richelieu, and never had she seen such men or such ravages. "If these armies believe in God," she said, "it is as the devils do." The army of Bois-Dauphin was also marching south-westward, to protect the progress of the Court. Friend or foe, royalist or rebel, it made no difference in the wholesale robbery and cruelty which desolated the villages, utterly destroying any lingering peaceful fruit of Henry's administration. Even Sully had now taken sides with Condé; and the Ducs de Soubise and de la Trémoïlle had raised a fresh army of Huguenots in Poitou. The wintry weather made everything worse. If the armies caused the wretched peasants to suffer, they suffered themselves. An icy rain was followed by hard frosts, snow, and "a great furious wind"; thousands of men, on both sides, died of the wet and the bitter cold. In Paris, boats and bridges were wrecked by the masses of broken ice in the Seine.

The Bishop of Luçon, writing strong remonstrances on his mother's and his own behalf to the commanders, was also painfully interested in the negotiations which began after the Court had reached Verteuil. He would have been glad to be actively employed, but his time was not quite come, and he could only look on, trusting to his friends—especially Claude Barbin, an old acquaintance, the trusted financial secretary of Marie de Médicis—to push his name and fortunes.

Both parties were tired of the struggle. The Court did not wish for eternal war: the princes and their followers saw that, the Spanish marriages once carried through, their wisest line of action was to make a good bargain for themselves while posing as disappointed patriots. The treaty of Loudun satisfied them for the time. Several of the King's older Ministers were sacrificed, notably Chancellor Sillery. The Maréchal d'Ancre had to give up his command in Picardy, with the strong city of Amiens, to the Duc de Longueville, but was consoled with the military government of Normandy. A general amnesty was published: President Le Jay was set at liberty, and

the Comte d'Auvergne was freed from his long confinement in the Bastille; the rights already granted to the Huguenots were confirmed; Condé's war expenses were paid, amounting to 1,500,000 *livres*. Decidedly a good bargain; the best he had ever made. "This time, it is true," says M. Henri Martin, "Condé's soldiers had well earned their money: they had pillaged, burnt, ravaged France with great zeal, from the banks of the Somme to those of the Garonne."

The other princes were also magnificently paid: their rebellion cost the country, "according to Richelieu, more than twenty millions"; and in the matter of places and governments, they had what they chose to demand. In addition, Condé claimed the right of signing the decrees of the Royal Council. The Duc de Villeroy, a clever old politician, advised the Queen to grant this also. It was better, he said, to bind Monsieur le Prince to the Court than to let him fortify himself in the provinces. "Do not fear," he said, "to put a pen in a man's hand while you are holding his arm."

So ended the demonstration against the Spanish marriages. Marie de Médicis gained her point: the princes found effectual consolation; and the poor people of France, as usual, paid the bill. The salt tax, which had been reduced, was raised to its former level, and new river tolls were established.

The Court lingered at Tours and at Blois until the whole business of the treaty was concluded, and made its triumphal entry into Paris on May 16, 1616—an unlucky conjunction of numbers, according to astrologers. The young Queen, a pretty and attractive girl in her indolent Spanish way—somewhat petulant, and no wonder, considering the miseries of the journey not to be escaped even by queens, and the cool neglect of her boy-husband—sat in an open litter carried by mules, for the better view of the citizens of Paris. The noise in the streets was so great—bells, drums and trumpets, the clatter of arms (for the city bands were all on foot and firing off their muskets)—that Her Majesty's mules pranced with terror, and she was

obliged to take refuge in her coach. But the welcome of Paris was undoubtedly hearty, and if the Spanish marriage still caused discontent, it did not appear openly. Indeed the Spanish embassy and their young Princess had only to complain of the fact that the opposite party had gained most of its ends in the treaty of Loudun, and that their enemy, the Prince de Condé, with certain Huguenot magnates, his allies, appeared for the moment to rule both Court and Council.

The Bishop of Luçon had preceded the Court to Paris. He had taken a house in the Rue des Mauvaises-Paroles, in the quarter of the markets; an old street which still existed in the early nineteenth century, but has since been swept away. Here he was within easy reach of his Court duties at the Louvre.

Under the high roofs of the palace, in the old round towers and new pavilions and galleries, crowded in a labyrinth of rooms and staircases, walled courts and gardens, surrounded by a confused noise of building, especially towards the river, where the long gallery, joining the Louvre to the Tuileries, was not yet finished, blocked to the west, on the site of the Place du Carrousel, by narrow streets of great hôtels and mean houses, churches, chapels, hospitals—lived the young King and Queen with their households, and the Queen-Mother, herself lodged in a low, dark, but richly furnished *entresol*, with as many of her ladies, attendants, favourites, servants, as could find room in the old rabbit-warren of so many and such ghostly memories.

At the moment, though her personal rule was not to last long, Marie de Médicis, the Florentine, the "fat banker," as Madame de Verneuil disrespectfully called her, was the centre of power and the fountain of promotion. It was therefore especially to her that the courtiers, Richelieu among them, paid their devoted duty.

Marie de Médicis was at this time a handsome, heavy-looking woman of forty-three; cold of temperament, grave and haughty in manner, yet without real dignity; obstinate, yet weak; nervous, irritable, subject to fits of violent

anger with floods of tears; never affectionate or caressing, even to her own children; fond of amusement, of animals, dwarfs, freaks of nature; passionately eager for power and magnificence; a lover of beautiful things, a generous but ignorant patron of art; especially curious of precious metals and stones, jewellery, bric-à-brac of all kinds; interested in architecture, building and gardening. She laid the first stone of her palace of "Luxembourg" in 1615, and in this very year 1616 she planted the stately avenue of elms, known as the Cours-la-Reine, along the river-bank beyond the gardens of the Tuileries. Splendid in her gifts, she was wildly extravagant, as soon as it became possible, with the money of the State. She was superstitious and religious, even *devote*, after her fashion, and the Church in France owed her much: if not refined by nature or training, she was yet always on the side of decency and moral reform. This is something to say for a woman who was forced for years to live in a Court and a society so openly and coarsely immoral, and to treat La Reine Margot as a friend and a sister.

At the time when Richelieu became attached to the Court, that eccentric princess was no longer living in her palace opposite the Louvre. She died in the spring of 1615, shortly after the closing of the States-General. In his memoirs the Cardinal devotes several pages to that "greatest princess of her time," her talents and her charities.

At the Louvre, next to the Queen-Mother, the most profitable objects of a courtier's devotion were the Maréchal and the Maréchale d'Ancre. They were Marie's most intimate and inseparable friends. Unworthy of such a position, no doubt: but the wife of Henry IV. was hardly happy enough willingly to dispense with those who had followed her from Florence. Leonora Galigaï, her nurse's daughter, first the companion of her childhood, had been appointed head of her maids: of low birth, but extremely clever, and only too capable of managing her mistress; though her own supposed account of her influence, "that of a clever woman over a dull fool," seems to have been

one of the many inventions of her enemies. A small, dark, ugly, keen-faced creature, Leonora had fallen in love with the handsome adventurer Concini, who had followed the Queen to France in search of fortune. They were married, and together they climbed the heights they desired. Concini swaggered among nobles and princes, the very type of a royal favourite. He was an insolent, magnificent bully, with whom the greatest in the land had to reckon. Yet, though envied and slandered, he was not entirely unpopular, even at Court. Bassompierre observed that he was neither perfection nor a fool. He had the daring courage which came of belief in his own lucky star. He was good-natured and kind, except to his wife; with her, in spite of their mutual interests, he quarrelled incessantly, and they lived mostly apart. But the many scandalous jokes, songs and stories which dealt with the supposed love-affairs of Concini and the Queen are pronounced by modern historians to be without foundation.

For some years the husband and wife concerned themselves little with politics. Money and position, especially money, of which Leonora was excessively greedy, were their favourite objects. They bought a palace in the Rue de Tournon, near the old Hôtel de Luxembourg, and furnished it splendidly. But Concini lived chiefly in a house near the river, at the south-east corner of the small garden of the Louvre, between it and the old Hôtel de Bourbon. By a bridge from the house to the garden he could communicate with his wife's apartments, above those of the Queen.

Leonora left her rooms seldom and unwillingly, except for necessary attendance on her mistress. She was a nervous invalid, and depended much on Jewish doctors, quack remedies, and—according to her enemies—the black art. We are also told, however, that she confessed regularly and caused the Bible to be read to her. M. Batiffol, in his picturesque study of the time, describes how she sat all day threading beads or playing the guitar—she was a fine musician—in the midst of rich hoards of every description : tapestry, embroidery, mirrors, cabinets,

carpets, cushions, counterpanes, of the most splendid materials; endless quantities of gold and silver plate; wardrobes and chests full of beautiful garments that she seldom wore. Beyond these treasures, she cared for little but money: when she meddled with politics, it was for the sake of money, or for her husband's advancement; and this last matter interested her keenly in the exciting changes of that winter, which had carried her, sorely against her will, on a most trying journey.

The return from that journey found the Maréchal d'Ancre, now Lieutenant-General of Normandy, at the height of his power, though a quarrel with the people of the markets lost him some popularity. The reconstruction of the Ministry, the fall of Sillery, the temporary superseding of Jeannin, President of the Council, and later of the Duc de Villeroy, left the way open for clever men such as Barbin and Mangot, both followers of Concini. Both admirers, too, of the Bishop of Luçon, who very soon, by their means, was to become a Minister of State.

From the point of view of a courtier or a politician, the inmates of the Louvre least worth considering were the young King and Queen. Both were born in 1601, and in that summer were not quite fifteen years old: two children, with the minds and tastes of children, on whom etiquette weighed heavily, who were shy of each other, and cared only for their own chosen companions and sports.

The little Queen seems to have been singularly childish, for a princess brought up in the stately Court of Spain. Surrounded at first by her Spanish ladies, who adored and petted her, she made grave ambassadors anxious, though her coquettish beauty attracted the French. But there was a lack of majesty, a love of jokes and games, an impatience of everything serious, a quick and wilful temper, an amazingly short memory, combined with a frank regret for her old life—"bien souvent l'Espagne me manque," she wrote home in the early days—hardly suitable to a Queen of France. Her new subjects did not complain; in truth, after the first rejoicings of her arrival, they saw little of her. Sometimes she appeared at Court

balls, ballets and *carrousels*, brilliant in her fresh youth, with her dazzlingly white skin, large eyes, chestnut hair, and the exquisite hands which were her crowning beauty. Sometimes she drove out in a coach to Saint-Germain, and spent the day hunting and hawking with the King, who hardly cared for her company at any other time. Her chaplain, the Bishop of Luçon, attended on her at the Louvre as a most formal duty. Personally, Anne never liked him. Though not yet too terrible, he was always too serious for her. But the Spanish ambassador wrote of him to Philip III.: "There are not two men in France so zealous for the service of God, of our Crown, and of the public weal."

Time was to show whether his Excellency was right on all or any of these points.

Louis XIII. had been an attractive little child, and was now a handsome, simple, straightforward boy, whose health and temper, unluckily, had been ruined by mismanagement. The diary of his physician, Hérouard—curious if unpleasant reading—shows us a child brought up on pills and potions quite as much as on food. Add constant and severe whippings for every small fault, and we have the training that Henry IV. and Marie de Médicis, here in entire agreement, thought fitting for their eldest son. Long after Louis was King of France the floggings continued, enraging interludes to Court etiquette and ceremonies. "Give me less manners and less whipping!" the poor boy cried one day, when his mother and her ladies rose and curtseyed on His Majesty's entrance.

No wonder that the face he turned to the outside world —including, for him, his mother and his wife—was sulky and misanthropic. He had affection to give; but it was all for the one or two special friends who understood him, and who made it their business to help and indulge him in the sports he cared about; hunting and hawking three or four days a week in the forests and the open country near Paris; while in the intervals there were rabbits and small birds to be caught in the precincts of the Louvre and the Tuileries, and on wet days various

indoor amusements—cooking, carpentering, turning, teaching his little dogs tricks, building card castles, and so on. He was passionately fond of music. Court functions bored him terribly; and though forced, after his majority, to attend the Council that ruled in his name, and behaving there with sufficient dignity and intelligence, he took very little active interest in affairs of State. This carelessness, though more apparent than real, exactly suited his mother, her favourites and her ministers. France was given to understand that the young King was too delicate, too incapable, to act for himself in any public way.

It was not unnatural that all who had political or social ends to gain should have thought it safe to ignore the King and Queen as children of no account. But Louis XIII. had one trusted friend; and the Bishop of Luçon, with many others, was bitterly to repent a too low estimation of the powers of the Sieur de Luynes.

Charles d'Albert de Luynes was now a man of eight-and-thirty. He was the eldest son of a small land-owner in Provence, and took his territorial name from a fief near Aix, which was his mother's dowry. His two younger brothers, Honoré and Léon, who shared his marvellous fortunes—one becoming Duc de Chaulnes, the other Duc de Piney-Luxembourg—were known in their earlier days as Seigneurs de Cadenet and de Brantes; Cadenet being a small island in the Rhône, Brantes a farm and vineyard on a hill at Mornas. The three brothers, all clever and amiable, caring for each other with an unselfish affection rare in those days, began life as pages to François de Daillon, Comte du Lude, a very great man in his own province of Anjou, and a witty and audacious courtier. He and his friend M. de la Varenne advanced the three young southerners to the service of King Henry IV., who gave them appointments in the Dauphin's household. Even then the three, generally liked and esteemed, says Richelieu, had but one pony and one good coat amongst them.

It was not only his skill in falconry and all other kinds of sport which endeared Luynes to his young master.

From the first he made himself his friend. He was a really good-natured man, as well as a fine sportsman and an ambitious courtier, and he laid himself out to give freedom and happiness to the oppressed, stammering boy. Louis learned, from a child, to fly to Luynes in all his troubles. He was his constant companion through the day, his chief playmate, the organiser of his leisure time. At night in his dreams, often restless and feverish, the boy would cry out for Luynes.

This high favour did not pass unnoticed, of course, by the Queen-mother and Concini. They might have crushed Luynes in the early days, but they took the line of propitiating him—a very great and fatal mistake, according to Richelieu. Marie gave him the government of Amboise, resigned by the Prince de Condé in 1615. She thought thus to make Luynes her creature; and the Maréchal d'Ancre, who had watched him anxiously for a short time, was deceived by his retiring manners into thinking him a man of no real account except among birds, but probably a useful friend, having the ear of the King.

Through this summer of 1616, the Bishop of Luçon was steadily advancing in favour. Marie de Médicis appointed him her private secretary, with a handsome pension, and employed him on several political missions. One of these was of real importance and led to striking results.

In spite of the treaty of Loudun and all its advantages, the Prince de Condé and his friends were still in a sulky frame of mind. Instead of coming at once to Paris, the Prince lingered in his new province of Berry, where the discontented showed signs of gathering round him once more. This temper of his caused much anxiety to Marie, her new Ministers, and the Maréchal d'Ancre. It seemed to them necessary that the Prince should come to Paris. Any fresh disloyalty would be less formidable there, and his support of the present government, if he chose to give it, would be more valuable.

The Bishop of Luçon was sent to negotiate with the Prince at Bourges. "The Queen sent me to him," he says, "believing that I should have sufficient fidelity and

skill to dissipate the clouds of suspicion which evil minds had falsely raised against her." Her belief was justified. Her envoy not only made the most of the promises with which he was laden—promises from herself, from the Maréchal d'Ancre, and last, not least, from Leonora—but he worked on the Prince's mind by his own clever and flattering persuasions, assisted probably by the influence of Père Joseph and his brother, M. du Tremblay, who were partisans of Condé.

The Prince came to Paris, and was honourably received by their Majesties at the Louvre. Immediately all Paris was at his feet. "The Louvre was a solitude," says Richelieu; "his house was the old Louvre"—on the site of part of the fortress of Philippe Auguste—"and one could not approach the door for the multitude of people crowding there. All who had any affair on hand addressed themselves to him; he never entered the Council but his hands were full of petitions and memoirs which had been presented to him, and which were granted at his will."

At first Condé enjoyed his new popularity and used his power with moderation. Had he been a wise man, he might have kept it long; but he was weak, dissipated, and fiercely ambitious, saying openly that he had as much right to the throne as the King himself. The other princes, especially the restless and intriguing Duc de Bouillon, worked upon his discontent. Naturally, their first object was the ruin of the Maréchal d'Ancre. Each of them had grievances of his own. Even the Ducs de Guise and d'Épernon, loyal to the Crown, were ready to draw their swords on the favourite. The former Ministers, the Parliament, the people of Paris, were all on the same side, and Concini's life, darkly plotted against in high places, was openly threatened in the street. One day, going alone to visit the Prince, who was entertaining the English ambassador, Lord Hay, he had a narrow escape of being killed by the servants.

Concini was a brave man, but he realised his danger, and both he and his wife were on the eve of escaping from France. Suddenly, however, the whole face of things

changed. The Queen-mother, solemnly warned by the Duc de Sully, saw that some bold step was necessary if she was to save herself, her friends, even the young King, from serious peril. For there were again grumblings of civil war in the provinces, where the Duc de Longueville was attacking the last fortress in Picardy which remained in Concini's hands.

The Ministers Barbin and Mangot, with the Bishop of Luçon, advised a *coup d'état*, and it was carried out with extraordinary ease. The Prince de Condé was arrested and imprisoned in the Bastille. The other princes fled, and Concini triumphed once more; but the people of Paris showed their hatred by sacking his palace in the Rue de Tournon, full of treasures worth 200,000 crowns.

On November 14, according to the registers of the parish of Braye, "s'en est allée de vie à trépas noble dame Suzanne de la Porte, dame de Richelieu." The Bishop of Luçon writes to his brother Alphonse:

"My dear Brother,—I regret much that you must learn by this letter our common loss of our poor mother, although I know that for you it will be the more bearable in that, having yourself renounced the world to gain heaven, her life and her death give you certain assurance of meeting her again there; since in the latter God gave her as much grace, consolation, and sweetness as in the former she had suffered contradiction, affliction and bitterness. . . . For myself, I pray God that in future her good example and yours may so profit me that I may amend my life."

M. Avenel gives a letter from Henry de Richelieu, the head of the family, to his sister Nicole (afterwards Madame de Maillé-Brézé), begging her to lay their mother's body, as honourably as possible, in the chapel of the château, there to await himself and the Bishop, "that we may all together bear her to the grave."

It was not till December 8 that "noble dame Suzanne de la Porte" was laid in the family vault under the church

of Braye. But it appears that her son Armand was waited for in vain. There was question of a special embassy to Spain on the affairs of the Duke of Savoy; there was the immediate prospect of becoming a Minister of France. Indeed, he was already one of a triumvirate—Barbin, Mangot, Richelieu—on whom, under Concini, depended all affairs of State. Between his mother's death and her funeral, he was writing letters vowing eternal gratitude both to the Maréchal and to Leonora, through whose favour and consideration alone, he declared, their Majesties had been pleased to appoint him Secretary for Foreign Affairs.

CHAPTER VI

1617

A contemporary view of the state of France—Barbin, Mangot, and Richelieu—A new rebellion—Richelieu as Foreign Secretary—The Abbé de Marolles—Concini in danger—The death of Concini—The fall of the Ministry—Horrible scenes in Paris—Richelieu follows the Queen-mother into exile.

THE Sieur de Pontchartrain, in his *Memoirs*, gives a vivid account of the state of France in the winter of 1616-17. He was not exactly an impartial judge, since he had himself been a Minister of State under the Duc de Villeroy, and he saw things from his patron's point of view. But he was an honest man.

Like Sully, he entirely failed to realise the political genius of the Bishop of Luçon, treating him and his colleagues as contemptible creatures of Concini. He writes of "the bad management of affairs, the small regard shown by the Queen-mother for the King, from whom all affairs are concealed, the unjust detention of M. le Prince de Condé and the alienation of all the other princes and great men, the ambitious designs, hurtful to France, of the Maréchal d'Ancre and of his wife, the banishment from affairs of all the old Ministers of State, and the establishment of two or three who have neither merit nor experience, except as ministering to the passions of the Maréchal and his wife (these were M. Mangot, Barbin, and Richelieu-Luçon). . . . Thus all things were embroiled; and in order to fortify herself against evil designs, the Queen-mother, assisted by the counsel of the said Maréchal d'Ancre and of the said *sieurs* Barbin, Mangot, and Richelieu, Bishop of Luçon, resolved to prepare openly for war."

Pontchartrain concludes that the sole motive of this worthless and tyrannical council was to maintain the Maréchal in absolute power: also that under the confusion of war expenditure might be concealed the "great gifts, pensions and appointments" which he took from the national finances.

That the Queen-mother was wrong-headed and foolish, that Concini's haughty swagger and Leonora's avarice and secret intrigues were hateful and degrading elements in both Court and government, no one can deny. But those who stand farther off than Pontchartrain may see what was hidden from him, and probably from many worthy persons of his day—that Barbin, Mangot and Richelieu were not unpatriotic in advising war against the rebel princes and nobles, whose motives, after all, were no purer than those of Concini.

As to themselves, Barbin was a man of clean hands, a rare attribute in those days; clear-headed and wise. Mangot, if not brilliant, had the merit of being loyal to his colleagues. Richelieu, in this first short ministry, gave every sign of future greatness, and in a way which makes not only Pontchartrain, but Sully, seem unnaturally blind. Henry's old Minister was one of those who spoke most slightingly of the man who, more than any other, was to carry on Henry's foreign policy.

He was amazingly eager and young. He sprang into office like a soldier into the saddle, his whole mind and body devoted at once to the service of his country. The administration of his poor little diocese had taught him to command men. That those who worked with him felt his superiority, not only in position but in talent, is shown by the fact that he was at once given precedence over the other Ministers. The Comte de Brienne resented this, observing in an unfriendly manner that a Bishop should reside in his diocese. The Maréchal d'Ancre, on the other hand, pressed Richelieu to resign his see. His motive was plain, and had nothing to do with the welfare of the people of Luçon: being thus deprived of his chief means of living, the young Minister would be entirely dependent on his

patron's will. Richelieu was far too clever to yield, and the advice of his friend Barbin strengthened his refusal. "Considering the changes which might come about, either through the changeable humours of that personage or by accidents to his fortune, I would never consent, which made him unreasonably angry."

He resigned his post of chaplain to the reigning Queen, in which he was succeeded by the young Bishop of Langres, Sébastien Zamet, second son of the great financier, and afterwards a conspicuous figure in the history of Port-Royal.

The first duty of the new Ministers was to crush a new rebellion, for the Ducs de Bouillon and de Nevers, demanding the release of Condé and the fall of Concini, had set the east of France in a blaze. Three armies had to be raised and sent to meet them. The commanders were chosen—the Comte d'Auvergne, the Duc de Guise, the Maréchal de Montigny; a harder matter was to find the men and the money. By means of a new tax, Richelieu and Barbin were able to hire a few thousand mercenaries from Flanders, Germany, Holland and Switzerland; the rest were recruited in France by gentlemen who took a heavy commission on their loyal work: indeed, as usual, the soldiers saw little of their promised pay, and were driven, as usual, to extract a living from the wretched people of the provinces. Champagne, the Île de France, the Nivernais, suffered in this winter of 1616 as Berry, Touraine and Poitou had done twelve months before.

One of the complaints of the malcontent princes against the government was the state of the national finances; in truth, the half-dozen years since Henry's death had reduced France from relative prosperity to something very like bankruptcy. But Richelieu retorted on the princes by a published statement, meant to enlighten the country as to the fate of some of its funds. The Prince de Condé had received 3,665,990 *livres*; the late Comte de Soissons, his wife and son (Charles de Bourbon died in 1612, and his family were even more restless and greedy than himself), 1,600,000 *livres*; the old Prince de Conti, now also dead, and his worldly widow, 1,400,000 *livres*; the Duc

de Longueville, 1,200,000 *livres*; the Duc de Mayenne, 2,000,000 *livres*; the Duc de Vendôme, 600,000 *livres*; the Duc d'Épernon, 700,000 *livres*; the Duc de Bouillon, 1,000,000 *livres*; all, says M. Martin, without counting "salaries, pensions, and gifts to their friends and servants." As a *livre* was about the same as a franc, and then worth five times as much as now, the smallest of these "gratifications" was equal to £120,000, and the largest to nearly £800,000 sterling. It must be added that the eight Marshals of France and six other great officers of the Crown received four times as much as in the days of Henry.

The royal armies were successful; they drove the princes before them, destroying their strongholds, and besieged them in the fortified towns to which they retreated. 'They were in despair," says Pontchartrain. Henry de Richelieu, a keen and good soldier, served as aide-de-camp to the Maréchal de Montigny.

It was at this time that Richelieu, as Secretary of State, gave the Powers of Europe the first intimation that French policy was not for ever to be bound up with the interests of Spain—a great change, after nearly seven years of Marie de Médicis' rule, and a striking forecast of the future England, Holland, and Germany were assured of the friendship of France, on the understanding that no assistance was given to the rebel princes. The Spanish marriages, Richelieu's ambassadors assured the Protestant Powers, did not bind Louis XIII. either to Rome or to Spain "to the prejudice of our ancient allies." The King would give equal treatment to his subjects of either religion. "No Catholic is so blind as to esteem a Spaniard, in matters of State, more highly than a French Huguenot."

Independence of Spain had already been practically shown by Richelieu in not forbidding the Duc de Lesdiguières, governor of Dauphiné, himself a distinguished Huguenot, to lead an army of his own across the Alps in order to support Duke Charles Emmanuel of Savoy in his quarrel with the Spanish Viceroy of Milan.

Thus Richelieu was already giving Europe a taste of his strength, and advancing, fast and fearlessly, beyond the

narrow lines of the Bishop of Luçon's courtly speech before the States-General. He was no longer "the man of the clergy," but "the man of France." Naturally he was losing the confidence of his empty-headed patron, who scolded the Ministers like schoolboys and was violently jealous of Richelieu's growing influence with the Queen.

"By God, sir," he wrote to him on some small matter of discontent, "I complain of you: you treat me too ill; you treat for peace without me; you make the Queen write to me that for the love of her I am to cease my pursuit of M. de Montbazon for the money he owes me. In the name of all the devils, what do you and the Queen expect me to do? Rage gnaws me to the bones."

A Ministry that depended on such a favourite was on a slippery slope indeed. The difficulties, at home and abroad, were enormous, and the wonder is that Richelieu and his colleagues, during their few months of uncertain power, were able to do so much.

Just at this time, when he was fighting the princes and parleying with Europe, the Abbé de Marolles gives a snapshot of him worth many formal portraits. The Abbé was then a young scholar at the university. His father, Claude de Marolles, a well-known soldier and courtier, once commanding the Swiss Guard, had joined the rebel princes and was attempting to negotiate between the Duc de Nevers and the commanders of the royal army.

M. Mangot, the Keeper of the Seals, sent for young Michel de Marolles and inquired of him whether he had received letters from his father or had had news from any of his father's people. He warned him to hide nothing of the truth—"parce qu'il y alloit du service du roi."

"There was M. de Luçon, in black, flung back (*renversé*) in a leathern chair, while M. le Garde des Sceaux stood up while speaking to me. . . ." Presently, "M. de Luçon, who knew my father pretty well and esteemed him, rose up in his chair and said that in truth he did not believe that M. de Marolles had turned against the King's service of his own free will, but that he was sorry he should have found himself engaged in so bad a cause. Then he added very

low that I might retire, and that he did not advise me to remain in Paris."

Such a warning, in those days, was not to be despised, and the young scholar was sent to his home in Touraine.

In spite of the political and military successes of the Ministers he was supposed to rule, the storm which overwhelmed the unlucky Concini was gathering all through that winter at the Louvre. Paris was careless and gay: after letting out her rage by sacking his house, she was content to enjoy the scurrilous songs and pamphlets, her favourite food, which rang through the streets and were sold by hundreds on the Pont Neuf.

"The year began joyously," writes Bassompierre, a lighter-hearted witness than Pontchartrain, and a loyal courtier of Marie de Médicis. "Many fine assemblies, at which, besides gambling, feasting, and comedy, there was also good music. Time passed pleasantly at the Fair of Saint-Germain."

The Maréchal and Leonora shared little in these amusements. He, at least, was troubled with a heavy presentiment of misfortune to come, and a present grief, the illness and death of their little daughter, caused them both "un cruel déplaisir." The friendly soul Bassompierre, who had known him in his Florentine days, visited them in their sorrow on the very day of the child's death. He found them together, "fort affligés," in the little house close to the Louvre.

"I tried as well as I could to console or divert him, but the more I spoke the more he grieved, and weeping answered me nothing, except "*Seignor*, je suis perdu; *seignor*, je suis ruiné; *seignor*, je suis misérable."

Bassompierre begged him to consider that he was a Marshal of France, and therefore that such lamentations, though worthy of his wife, were unworthy of him; adding in the candid fashion of the time that although he had lost an amiable daughter he had yet four nieces, by whose means he might ally himself with any four great French houses that he might choose—"and many other things which God inspired me to say."

"Ah, monsieur," replied Concini, "I truly mourn my daughter, and shall mourn her as long as I live. Nevertheless, I am a man able to endure with constancy a grief such as this; but the ruin of myself and my wife, my son and my house, which I see before my eyes, and which my wife's obstinacy makes inevitable, causes me to lament and to lose patience."

He went on to tell Bassompierre the familiar story of his life, curious enough from his own point of view. According to him, he had been perfectly happy and prosperous till within the last few months—since, in fact, to outward view, he had possessed almost sovereign power. His excitable southern nature was not made to stand firm against the assaults of fortune, party hatred, popular fury and insult; in all this he saw warnings from heaven of coming ruin, terrible and complete. On his knees, he said, he had implored his wife to retire with him to Italy, where with their immense fortune they could establish themselves magnificently and leave a fine heritage to their son. But the Maréchale, with more courage, if also with a more greedy, unsatisfied ambition, absolutely refused to leave France. It was cowardly and ungrateful, she said, to think of forsaking the Queen, to whom they owed their honours and their wealth. "If it were not for my obligations to my wife," he said, "I would leave her, and go where neither nobles of France nor common people would follow and find me."

Bassompierre went away reflecting how men uplifted by fortune are often inspired to foresee a coming fall; but also how seldom they have resolution enough to avoid it.

If Concini was sincere in his wish to leave his dangerous eminence, this episode throws a tragic light on his conduct during the first three months of 1617. His insolent bravado at Court and elsewhere seems now the desperation of an adventurer fighting hopelessly for his life. It was hardly necessary for M. de Luynes to poison the King's mind against the Maréchal d'Ancre; he did it himself. A day seldom passed without some new insult, some fresh mark of disrespect shown to Royalty. The Maréchal

laughed at the boy, teased him, did not uncover in his presence. Standing with one or two attendants at a window in the Louvre, Louis looked down with proud and gloomy eyes on the Maréchal's splendid suite as it pranced in the courtyard without a salute to spare for him. When the King wanted money—which frequently happened, for his mother did not indulge him in that way or any other—the Maréchal asked him, with an air of dashing liberality which deeply offended the boy, why he had not applied to him.

Luynes was an ambitious man, of course; but any loyal servant of the King would have done well to be angry, and Concini, by refusing him one of his nieces in marriage, had made a personal enemy of him. While Louis, sad and bored from childhood, went his melancholy way, catching little birds, wheeling barrows of turf to make banks in the Tuileries gardens, his handsome falconer was always there, whispering a deeper discontent into ears by no means dull. The removal of Concini, his wife and his parasites, would mean the Queen-mother's fall from the height of power she had usurped ever since the King was declared major, thus ending her regency. It would mean the submission of the rebel princes and nobles, who were even now declaring themselves, by secret letters and messages, faithful servants of the King. It would seat Louis XIII. on his father's throne.

There was only one way. Louis was at first unwilling that the Maréchal should be killed. He discussed other plans with Luynes and two or three confidants. He might escape from Paris to Amboise, where a brother of Luynes was in command and where his friends might gather round him; or he might join the princes, taking the command of their forces, which would thus become his own. These ideas reached the Queen-mother, and his guards were changed for others whom she could trust. Escape was made impossible, and from that time Concini was doomed.

Luynes and his fellows, with the King's full consent, plotted the affair with M. de Vitry, captain of the guard, a bold, resolute man. On the morning of Monday, April 24,

this officer with a few companions met Concini at the entrance of the Louvre on his way to pay his daily visit to the Queen.

"Sir," said Vitry, "I arrest you, by order of the King."

"À moi!" cried Concini, laying his hand on his sword; but before his train of startled courtiers knew what was happening, three of Vitry's men had fired their pistols in his face; he fell dead, shot through the brain.

Not a sword was drawn to avenge him; the words "By order of the King," had suddenly recovered their old magic power, and the whole palace echoed with "Vive le Roi!"

On that fatal morning, the Bishop of Luçon was paying an early visit to a distinguished doctor of the Sorbonne, one of the rectors of the University. The news reached the two theologians by means of a third, who brought it from the Palais de Justice. M. d'Ornano, one of the conspirators, had been sent there direct from the Louvre to inform the Parliament of what had happened: such a precaution was necessary, for Paris was already in an uproar. Rumour cried in the streets that the young King had been wounded, and by the hand of the Maréchal. The shops were hastily shut and crowds were pouring towards the Louvre, to meet the news that the King was well and the Maréchal dead. Then Paris burst into acclamations of joy.

For the Bishop of Luçon the event was of the most serious consequence, but he wasted neither time nor words in lamenting his patron.

"I was the more surprised," he says, "as I had never foreseen that those who were near the King would be strong enough to design such an enterprise. I immediately quitted the company of that doctor, famous both for his teaching and his virtue, who did not forget to say quite *à propos* what I might have expected from a man of his learning—as to the inconstancy of fortune and the uncertainty of all that may seem most settled in human life."

On the Pont Neuf, as he drove home, the Bishop met his friend M. du Tremblay, full of the news, who told him that the King was inquiring for him. Before presenting

himself at the Louvre, he sought out his terrified colleagues, Mangot and Barbin, who feared the worst for themselves and for him. It was agreed that they should go one by one, the Bishop first, to receive His Majesty's commands.

It was the first really alarming crisis in Richelieu's life. There is no doubt that so clever a man must have expected something of the kind, must have known that the favourite's tyranny could not last for ever. It was only a few days indeed since he and Barbin, having discovered that Concini meant to get rid of them and to replace them with more submissive Ministers, had privately offered their resignation to the Queen, who refused to receive it. Also, it seems, with a view to his own safety, Richelieu had made some advances towards friendship with M. de Luynes. But, for all that, the moment was dangerous. Both Court and populace were likely to turn against those who had owed their power to the dead Maréchal; various threats and warnings had already reached the ears of Barbin. For Richelieu himself, as he mounted the grand staircase of the Louvre, the signs were not exactly favourable. "I saw many faces of those who had caressed me two hours before, and who now did not recognise me."

In the great gallery, crowded with courtiers and armed men, young Louis XIII. was standing on a billiard table, to be seen by all. There is a picturesque story that he cried out, on seeing the Bishop approach, "Eh bien, Luçon! me voilà hors de votre tyrannie!" Whatever the boy may have thought or said, M. de Luynes was not so impolitic as to make a mortal enemy of the most brilliant man in the kingdom. Mangot might be scornfully neglected, Barbin might be imprisoned—as they were—but Luçon seemed worth winning, or at least keeping in the balance till the King and his mother had arranged their differences.

According to Richelieu's own account, the King spoke to him kindly—"saying that he knew I had always loved him (he used those words) and had taken his part on various occasions, in consideration of which he would treat me well." M. de Luynes joined in, with protestations of friendship. But this was merely personal. When Richelieu

tried to plead for his colleagues, who deserved the royal favour neither more nor less than himself, Luynes would not listen. He also replied very coldly to the Bishop's request to see the Queen-mother, now strictly guarded in her own rooms.

He gave him to understand, however, that he was still of the royal Council, and advised him to present himself in the Council-chamber. Richelieu did so; but only to be treated as an intruder. The old Ministers, Villeroy, Jeannin and the rest, were already in their former places, and were deeply engaged in the business of reversing Richelieu's policy; while sending despatches to all the provinces, to the armies, to the rebel princes and to foreign courts with the news that the King of France had at length come to his own.

It was a curious position for the late Secretary of State. After standing for a few minutes inside the door, speaking to one or two councillors, he thought it best to retire quietly, and went home to his house.

At the Louvre, shut up in her apartments, but still surrounded by her ladies, the Queen-mother lamented with hard, tearless passion—not the death of her favourite, which troubled her little, but the loss of her own authority. Fear of the future and of her son's vengeance filled her mind, to the exclusion of every other human feeling. She had no pity to spare even for the miserable Leonora, her lifelong friend, who was seized by the guards immediately after her husband's death, plundered of all her treasures and imprisoned, first in the Louvre, then in the Bastille, her son Henry Concini, a boy of thirteen, having been torn from her. The little Comte de la Pena, as they called him, was a pretty boy and a famous dancer. The Comte de Fiesque, the young Queen's equerry, took him under his protection and brought him to her. Anne made him dance, fed him with sweetmeats, and kept him in her household till his fatal name condemned him also to prison. Some time later, he was set free and sent back to Italy.

The murderers of Concini robbed his dead body of money and jewellery and left it lying under a staircase

in the court of the Louvre, near the gate through which crowds of Parisians of every rank, who had trembled before the Maréchal, came crowding to pay their homage to the King. During the day his house near the Louvre and his wife's apartments were completely sacked and pillaged, their flying servants chased in all directions. In the evening his body was carried secretly across the way to the Church of Saint-Germain l'Auxerrois and buried, with no funeral rites, behind the organ.

But the fury and rage of the mob were far from being satisfied. The Parisians of 1617 were the ancestors of those of 1793. "The next morning," says Pontchartrain, "the 25th of the said month of April, day of Saint Mark, about ten o'clock, a few women and children, in the Church of Saint-Germain of the Auxerrois, began to say one to another, standing over the place where he had been interred: 'See where they have buried that tyrant: is it right that he, who did so much evil, should lie in holy ground and in a church? No, no; out with him; throw him on a dunghill!' And exciting each other with such words, they began with sticks to break up the stone under which the body lay; the women using knives and scissors, until strong men began to lend a hand. In less than half an hour two or three hundred persons were assembled; they raise the stone, take out the body, tie cords round the neck, drag it out of the church and thence through the streets, with horrible shouts and yells, some saying it should be thrown into the river, others that it should be burnt, others that it should be hanged on a gibbet; each one worse than the last. Thus they found themselves at the end of the Pont Neuf, where there were two or three gibbets set up."

Gibbets had been planted here and there in the city by Concini's orders, "to frighten those who dared speak ill of him." To cut the horrible story short, they hanged his dead body on one of these and then tore it to pieces with the savagery of wild beasts, burning part and throwing part into the river.

Richelieu was an eye-witness of these horrors. He was

on his way to visit the Pope's Nuncio, and his coach drove on to the bridge, a favourite thoroughfare, to find it a mass of people absorbed in their dreadful work and "so drunk with fury that there was no means of getting them to make way for the passage of coaches."

The Bishop's coachman was indiscreet enough to take matters with the usual high hand and to attempt to force his way. One of the men who was roughly hustled made a loud complaint.

"At that instant," Richelieu writes, "I saw my peril, in case any one should cry out that I was a partisan of the Maréchal d'Ancre. To save myself, after violently threatening my coachman, I asked them what they were doing, and when they had answered me according to their fury against the Maréchal, I said to them, 'You are men who would die to serve the King: shout, all of you, *Vive le Roi!*' I led them off, and thus I gained free passage, and I took good care not to return the same way; I recrossed by the Pont Notre Dame."

A few days later, after a painful interview with her son —at which her stony calm broke down and she wept bitterly—and after formal farewells from court and city, Marie de Médicis quitted Paris for an honourable captivity at the Château de Blois. Her younger children took leave of her at the gate of the city. She was accompanied by a train of faithful servants, French and Italian, among whom the most distinguished was the Bishop of Luçon; it was largely owing to his influence with Luynes that the Queen had not been treated with greater severity.

Two months later, after an unfair and absurd trial, the Maréchale d'Ancre was beheaded in the Place de Grève and her remains burnt to ashes. Most of the money, property, and possessions which she and her husband had accumulated during their years of power was bestowed upon the King's friend and favourite, now Duc de Luynes and Lieutenant-General of Normandy. For his own not very considerable share in the ruin and death of Concini and his wife, Louis XIII. was rewarded by the French people with the title of "Le Juste."

CHAPTER VII

1617—1619

Richelieu at Blois—He is ordered back to his diocese—He writes a book in defence of the faith—Marriage of Mademoiselle de Richelieu—The Bishop exiled to Avignon—Escape of the Queen-mother from Blois—Richelieu is recalled to her service.

IN this swift and sudden way Richelieu fell from power. The position in which he now found himself was difficult enough. He was the Queen-mother's chief friend and confidant in the early days of her exile at Blois, and the head of her council, but he was surrounded by mischievous rivals, some Italian, some French, who played him false and undermined his influence. The Queen's household, following its royal mistress's lead, was all plot and intrigue, delusion and fury. Almost the only wise person, besides Richelieu himself, was his old friend Madame de Guercheville, Marie's lady of honour. She, at least, saw good cause for the Bishop of Luçon's endeavour to keep the little captive Court at Blois in favour with the Court of the Louvre by a constant and civil correspondence with the almighty Luynes. She saw the force of the Bishop's reasoning—that the actual state of things must be accepted—that the King was the King, and his subjects, including his mother, might as well rebel against Heaven. Therefore Richelieu was doing his best for Her Majesty—and incidentally for himself too—by representing her and her servants as absolutely devoted to the service of the King.

It is natural enough that Luynes, listening to Richelieu's enemies, was not inclined to trust him, either as to the

Queen-mother's peaceable loyalty or his own. But he made no mistake as to the Bishop's political genius; and therefore, it seems, he decided to deprive the Queen-mother of his services.

The intrigue is not very clear, even to this day. Richelieu had a letter from his brother, the Marquis, warning him that the King was displeased with him and that he would shortly be ordered to retire to his diocese. Afterwards it appeared that the information, conveyed by friends at Court to Henry de Richelieu, was false, or at least premature. But the Bishop acted on it without delay. Knowing that Marie would not willingly part with him, he asked for a fortnight's leave of absence and went to the Château de Richelieu. From thence he wrote to the King and to Luynes, protesting his loyalty and complaining of the calumnies of his enemies. The King sent a cold reply, advising him to attend to the duties of his diocese and to remain within its bounds till further orders.

Marie de Médicis was passionately angry, and wrote furious letters to her son and the favourite. It was treating her not like a mother, but like a slave, she said, thus to affront her by removing her most capable servant. But her bitter complaints were of no avail.

Richelieu resigned himself in a more dignified fashion. Every action of his life must be considered in view of the fact that he was a politician of extraordinary cleverness, with clear eyes fixed unchangeably on the future of power which he always meant to attain. For five months, under most troublesome circumstances, he had practically ruled France. He had built his castle eagerly, swiftly, successfully; and then a far less clever man, by whispering into the ready ear of a boy, had shaken it to the ground. It had been built, of course, on the wrong foundation: the Bishop of Luçon had plenty of time to reflect, as he sat among his books at Coussay, on the too late realised truth that divinity hedged a king, that Louis XIII. was the master.

It is doing Richelieu no injustice to suggest that if he had been well received in the King's Council-chamber on

that tragic April 24, he might never have followed the Queen-mother to Blois. His sincere admirer, M. Avenel, says, "His first thoughts were given to the Court and the Ministry; only his second to exile and the Queen: ambitious by temperament, generous from necessity, the seeming heroism of his fidelity in misfortune reduces itself to this."

And that very semblance of heroic fidelity was probably based on the calculation that Marie de Médicis, being the King's mother and a person not easily crushed or ignored, would be reconciled to her son before many months had passed by. That Richelieu had any real feeling for her beyond the banal devotion of a courtier seems exceedingly doubtful. He was a hard creature, made of steel and flame, and Marie, a dozen years older than himself, was not an attractive woman. The hasty retreat from Blois was no personal grief to him.

In short, Richelieu now set himself to please—or rather, not to displease—Louis XIII., on whose favour his fortunes so clearly depended. His faith in the future never really deserted him, though for seven years, like Jacob, he served and waited in the wilderness.

During that first summer, at his pleasant priory of Coussay, he wrote a book.

The worthy Père Cotton, the Jesuit confessor of Henry IV. and Louis XIII., had been dismissed by Luynes. His successor, the Père Arnoux, a much less discreet personage, preached a violent sermon before the King against the Protestants, accusing them of misunderstanding and misinterpreting the Bible. Four ministers of Charenton, learned men, published a spirited reply, which was suppressed by royal order, after discussions in the Sorbonne and the Parliament. But the Huguenots boasted loudly that the Catholics could not defend themselves, and it appeared to the Bishop of Luçon that indeed the Church had supplied no remedy to save souls from the evil effects of reading "that pernicious book."

"Therefore," he says, "I employed the leisure of my solitude in answering it; and owing to the length of

time during which I had been diverted from the exercise of my profession, I laboured with such ardour that in six weeks I finished the work."

This Defence of the Catholic Faith was a book of 250 pages, full of theological learning, and written with moderation, tact, and practical good sense. The Bishop here preached again those doctrines of toleration, of conversion by reasoning, not by force, with which he had met the Huguenots of his diocese ten years before. It was the book of a statesman as much as of a theologian. He marshalled an army of arguments to prove the ministers in the wrong; enjoined on the schismatics loyalty and obedience to the laws; but for the King he advised gentleness and patience; the object to be sought by all being national unity and peace. The book was printed at Poitiers, and published within three months of its beginning. It was greatly admired, and added much to its author's reputation; but also, as he notes rather sadly, "it burdened me with envy." His enemies saw that they had not silenced the Bishop of Luçon by banishing him to his diocese.

There, during these months of enforced residence, he seems to have worked with all the freshness and "ardour" consequent on absence and change of thoughts. He writes in August to the Nuncio: "I am here in my diocese, where I try to make known by all my actions that I have and shall have no other passion than doing all I can for the glory of God." A word of personal complaint in his letters is rare. He was surrounded by his friends, living in a pleasant and healthy little château where the people loved him. Sébastien Bouthillier was now Dean of Luçon and his constant companion. He had his books, collected in the days when he, La Rocheposay, Saint-Cyran and the rest found their diversion in study; and if all these things were not the passion of his life, yet he loved them still. He might have been far more of a bookworm than he really was, from the tone of his letters at this time. "I live at a little hermitage among books" . . . "I am living quietly here in the enjoyment of my books" . . .

"Serving God and my friends, I am resolved to spend the time quietly among my books and my neighbours;" and much more of the same kind. Now and then, it is true, when news from the great outside world comes to him, sitting helpless in his hermitage, he is seized with restless impatience and confesses himself *malheureux*. But this is only in letters to his own family and to his friend Père Joseph: the face turned to the King and to all public personages is dignified, grave and serene.

Richelieu watched, from distance and obscurity, the still rising fortunes of the Duc de Luynes. The lucky Provençal, of doubtful nobility, was able to choose a wife among the noblest, richest and most beautiful women in France. He refused Mademoiselle de Vendôme, Henry IV.'s daughter—who afterwards married the Duc d'Elbeuf—probably from fear and dislike of her odious brother. He would have nothing to say to Mademoiselle d'Ailly and her enormous fortune, but arranged a marriage for her with his younger brother Cadenet, a dashing soldier, who took the title of Duc de Chaulnes from one of her estates. His own choice fell on Marie de Rohan, daughter of the Duc de Montbazon, then a lovely wild girl of seventeen. After his death she married the Duc de Chevreuse, a younger brother of the Duc de Guise, and was for years the most admired beauty and most mischievous woman in Europe.

Another piece of news was the removal of the Prince de Condé, "ce petit brouillon," whom Luynes had not dared to set free, from the Bastille to the Château de Vincennes. His wife, Charlotte de Montmorency, was now allowed to share his imprisonment, and the consequence was the birth of Princess Anne-Geneviève de Bourbon, afterwards the famous Madame de Longueville. Louis de Bourbon, the great Condé, was not born till after his father's release.

Later in the year, the Duc de Villeroy died at seventy-four. He was one of the best of those old Ministers of State whom Henry IV. left to his widow, the Regent. The Pope's Nuncio, Bentivoglio, had a high opinion of him. "Great was his experience, great his integrity; . . . a

good Frenchman and a good Catholic," says the Italian diplomat. Richelieu describes him as a sincere man of good judgment, but narrow-minded and jealous, and adds that he died after fifty-one years' service with clean hands, possessing little more than he had inherited from his forefathers. It was a fine testimonial to Villeroy from the young rival who, if only for a few months, had thrown him into the shade.

Richelieu was less generous with regard to Jacques-Auguste de Thou, the "faithful and austere," "light of France" and "prince of historians," as Camden called him, who died in that same year. Richelieu observes of him that his piety was not equal to his learning, that knowledge and action are different things, and that the speculative science of government needs certain qualities of mind not always found to match it. The inwardness of this criticism lies in the fact that de Thou, in his Latin History of the sixteenth century, made certain scornful and severe remarks on Richelieu's ancestors and the part they took in the Wars of Religion. Richelieu, exceedingly sensitive as to the honour of his family, never forgave this, and when in 1642 François-Auguste de Thou lost his head in the Cinq-Mars catastrophe, it was currently believed that the Cardinal might have spared him but for those paragraphs in his father's history.

In November 1617 Nicole du Plessis-Richelieu, the Bishop's younger sister, was married quietly in Paris to a distinguished but eccentric Angevin noble, the Marquis de Maillé-Brézé. Nicole was now a woman of thirty. She had lived at Richelieu until her mother's death; her portion cannot have been large; of her brothers, one was a more or less struggling courtier, one a monk, one a politician out of office. She possessed little beyond a singular beauty and charm; the Marquis de Brézé, who married her for love, cannot have foreknown the brilliant thing he was doing. Brother-in-law to the most powerful man in Europe, father-in-law of the great Condé, Marshal of France, governor of Anjou, Viceroy of Catalonia, the Marquis had everything; and, "extravagant" as he was, cared most

of all for a good dog and a new book. But the marriage turned out unhappily. Nicole de Richelieu went out of her mind—one of her mad fancies being that she was made of glass—and died shut up in the castle of Saumur. M. de Brézé was a bad husband, though a clever and accomplished man. According to the stories of the time, it was his unkindness and brutal infidelity that upset poor Nicole's weak brain.

The Bishop, of course, was not present at his sister's marriage; but he appears to have made all the necessary arrangements with M. de Brézé, leaving the actual ceremony to be managed by Henry de Richelieu and his young wife.

The Duc de Luynes was nervous on his lonely pinnacle of power. The presence of the Queen-mother at Blois was a constant anxiety to him; she was not only, in his eyes, an enemy to the State, but his own personal and unforgiving enemy. And more than the Queen-mother he feared her friends; certain of the great nobles, who were already beginning to resent his exaltation, and those former ministers who had been the real strength of her rule. Barbin was still in the Bastille. With an appearance of leniency, Luynes made his imprisonment easier and winked at a correspondence between him and the Queen. Copies of every letter came into the hands of Luynes. Marie's messengers boasted of their mistress's new freedom and speedy return to the Court.

These intrigues, dangerous from Luynes' point of view, came to a sudden end. Barbin, strictly imprisoned, nearly lost his head; many arrests were made; two or three poor creatures who had written pamphlets on the Queen's side were cruelly put to death; Marie's own imprisonment was made much more rigorous, royal guards and royal spies with new and strict orders being set to watch the Château de Blois.

Thus setting himself to terrorise the Queen-mother and her friends, Luynes did not forget the Bishop of Luçon. On Wednesday in Holy Week, 1618, Richelieu received a letter from the King full of vague accusations of "goings

and comings and secret proceedings which caused umbrage and suspicion, affecting the King's service and the tranquillity of his subjects," ordering him to retire immediately to Avignon, there to remain till further commands.

"I was not surprised at receiving this despatch," he says in his *Memoirs*, "having always expected unjust, barbarous and unreasonable treatment from the cowards who governed us. . . . But as I was accused of acting against His Majesty's service, I humbly begged him to send some dispassionate person to examine the facts on the spot, being sure that by such means His Majesty would be convinced of my innocence."

It does not appear indeed that Richelieu had been much concerned, if at all, in the recent intrigues between Blois and Paris. But Luynes was afraid of him; and he was forced to depart instantly for that exile which was the saddest experience of his younger life—proving once more the old truth that the night is darkest before the dawn.

He left Luçon on Good Friday, for the royal commands admitted of no delay, and started on the long, difficult, cross-country journey from Poitou to the Venaissin. In wind-swept Avignon, still a half-Italian city belonging to the Pope, he hired a house and settled himself to endure the cruel idleness of banishment. He was not alone. His brother and brother-in-law, M. de Richelieu and M. du Pont-de-Courlay, shared his exile, for they too were old adherents of the Queen-mother, and Luynes feared them all. He shut up his captive birds in the same cage—"a great consolation to us," says the Bishop, "though it was not done for that end, but in order to keep us in sight together."

Once more he flung himself into hard study. He wrote or dictated a large collection of fragmentary notes, which took the form of a kind of apology or explanation of his political views and doings. He wrote a religious book, *L'Instruction du Chrétien*, planned long before. He seeems to have led a solitary and studious life, seeing few people, writing few letters except to his diocese, medi-

tating much and suffering much, for he was ill in body as in mind.

And in the autumn the gloom of exile was deepened by severe family sorrows. The young Marquise de Richelieu, Marguerite Guiot des Charmeaux, whom her husband had been obliged to leave behind, died at Richelieu after the birth of her first child. The little boy, François Louis, only lived a few weeks, and was then laid in the vault at Braye with his mother and his ancestors. It was not long before Henry de Richelieu himself joined that company.

He was terribly grieved and desolate. Every glimpse that we have of his wife shows her good and charming, and the blows of fortune may well have seemed to both brothers too heavy to bear. The child's death meant the extinction of the direct male line of du Plessis-Richelieu.

After some weeks, by the intervention of their old friend Bassompierre, the Marquis and his brother-in-law M. du Pont-de-Courlay were allowed to go to Richelieu and to Paris on their family business. The Bishop remained alone at Avignon.

His solitude there was of his own choice, for the Vice-Legate and other dignitaries were ready to make much of him, and a letter to his brother, written in February 1619, shows him very sensible of some special kindness. He commissions M. de Richelieu to buy and to send him the most beautiful hackney he can find—"mais belle tout-à-fait"—probably such a gentle, ambling creature as a Vice-Legate would ride—as well as pieces of choice goldsmith's work to hang on watches. His anxiety is that the presents should be "something conformable to his condition," for it is better to give nothing at all than "un maigre présent." The Bishop of Luçon, in poverty and exile, had already the splendid tastes of the Éminentissime.

But in actual fact he was very solitary and intensely sad. For once in his life he seems to have lost faith in his star, and as the conviction that he would die in exile gained strength, he thought a good deal of the poor little diocese he might never see again. He wrote a curious document,

a kind of last will, dated February 8, and addressed to the Chapter of Luçon. After some expressions of sincere affection, he leaves his body to the Cathedral, "that I may repose when dead in the same place where, living, I desire to be. . . ."

". . . The place of my sepulture shall be, if you please, immediately above the singers' desk, leaving the higher part of the choir, as more honourable, for those who shall come after me. . . .

"I leave you also all the silver plate of my chapel, my ornaments, and hangings of Flemish tapestry, to adorn the choir, without any condition whatever, trusting to be helped by your prayers. . . .

"If I could leave you anything more, I would very willingly do so; my will surpassing my power, my wishes for you must supply the defect.

"The first benefit I wish you is to live in clear consciousness of your condition, keeping before your eyes that this world is but illusion, and that there is no profit or contentment except in the service of God, who never forsakes them who serve Him.

"I desire for you a bishop who, equalling me in affection, may surpass me in all other qualities. . . . I conjure him, whoever he may be, to reside with you, to visit his diocese, to encourage in their duty, by his example and his teaching, those who have the care of souls under him, to maintain and augment the seminary founded at Luçon, to which I leave a thousand *livres* and my whole library. . . ."

To this seminary for priests, a favourite foundation of his, Richelieu had already given the revenues of an abbey in Poitou. He ends his testament by beseeching the Chapter to live in the closest union with his successor.

"After this, Sirs, it only remains to conjure you to love my memory as that of a person who tenderly loves you and passionately desires your salvation."

Richelieu's final farewell to the Luçon Chapter was written four years later, in less affectionate and more businesslike terms. He was about to be plunged in the

political whirlpool which swallowed the rest of his life, when he resigned the see in favour of M. de Bragelogne, receiving in exchange the Abbey of Notre Dame du Wast in the diocese of Le Mans, a canonry and prebend at St. Martin of Tours, and a retiring pension of 6,000 *livres*.

The town of Blois was asleep in the dark small hours of February 23, when Queen Marie de Médicis got out of her window in the Château, climbed or slid down a hundred and twenty feet of ladders—a really wonderful feat in a woman of her size and indolence—hurried through the silent streets to the bridge over the Loire, got into a coach with two or three attendants and some boxes of money and jewels, and drove off, first to Loches, then to Angoulême. When Blois, castle and town, awoke in the morning, the captive royal bird had flown.

The affair had been arranged, with extraordinary cleverness and secrecy, by the Abbé Rucellai, one of those Italians in Marie's household whose intrigues had brought about the disgrace of Richelieu. The active agent was the old Duc d'Épernon.

He had been a courtier of Henry III. and Henry IV., and had not yet taken up arms in actual rebellion. It was he who stood by Marie de Médicis after the death of Henry, and faced the Parliament with a fierce declaration of her right to the Regency. She had not been grateful: the Maréchal d'Ancre took the place in her court which d'Épernon considered his due. Too proud for a lower position, he retired to his estates and governments, which were many, including the town of Metz, Saintonge, and the Angoumois. The rule of Luynes was quite as offensive to him as that of Concini had been, and the plot for the Queen's escape was welcomed by one of the boldest, most romantic and adventurous characters of the century.

When the time drew near, the Duke was at Metz. It was necessary to gain the Angoumois by a secret dash across France, beset with so many dangers that the chroniclers called that ride "le voyage d'Amadis." His province successfully reached, the Duke sent two active

young men to Blois to manage the actual escape, and himself waited for the Queen at Loches, then conveying her to a place of greater safety. She was now free to make terms with her son or to set France on fire against him.

The Duc de Luynes heard of Her Majesty's "sortie" with amazement and alarm. He had long watched her uneasily; and his brother afterwards told Richelieu that he had resolved to take the King to Blois on the pretext of a friendly visit, but really to convey the Queen-mother "politely" to Amboise, his own stronghold, where "she would remain for the future under good and sure guard." He knew well that her quarrel with him grew more bitter with every month of her captivity. During that very winter he had married her second daughter, Madame Christine, to the Prince of Piedmont, the Duke of Savoy's son, with scarcely the formal courtesy of asking her consent. Such an insult Marie was not likely to forget.

Once at liberty, she might become the rallying centre for all the discontented in the kingdom, and Luynes knew that they were many. He had offended the nobles by withdrawing various pensions, and had set the great Protestant party against him by royal decrees, especially one which aimed at restoring Catholic worship in the little kingdom of Béarn.

For a few days civil war seemed imminent. The King and Luynes, both furiously angry, began to raise troops, and talked of riding off to the west. But Luynes was not Concini. He was prudent *au fond*, some say timid, and no soldier. He began to ask advice from wiser men in Paris and elsewhere, even from the Duc de Bouillon, head of the Protestants, and they all with one voice counselled peace. Besides, the nobles showed no great eagerness to rebel suddenly against the King by joining the Queen-mother and d'Épernon, while Marie's letters to her son gave a kind of basis for negotiations. It was resolved to throw the actual blame of the affair on d'Épernon, and a royal edict at once deprived him of all his appointments and governments, while ambassadors,

carefully chosen to please the Queen, were sent to her at Angoulême. It seemed possible that such persuasive tongues as those of her old favourite the Père de Bérulle and of the Comte de Béthune, Sully's more courtly brother and a devoted servant of Henry IV., might induce her to accept the terms offered by her son, to renounce the company of rebels against his authority, and to choose a peaceable residence in some other part of the kingdom.

There were those in Paris at the moment who did not wait for the failure of these negotiations to suggest an even wiser plan. One man in France could manage the Queen-mother: he was in exile at Avignon. Restore him to her council; give him authority to mediate between her and the King; his cleverness and moderation would soon bring her to a less violent frame of mind, and so arrange matters to the King's satisfaction.

The originators of this idea were Richelieu's two faithful friends, the Dean of Luçon and Père Joseph.

The wonderful friar had been much away from France during Richelieu's exile. He had been to Rome and to Spain, travelling mostly on foot, as the rule of his Order required. He had been working hard on the details of a new crusade against the Turks, with the object not only of rescuing the Holy Places, but of driving Islam out of Europe. It was the favourite dream of Joseph's life. He worked at its realisation in concert with the Duc de Nevers, Charles de Gonzague, who was descended, through his mother, from the Christian emperors of the East. These two, with the Pope's sanction, founded a crusading order of chivalry, "La Milice Chrétienne," and before the Thirty Years War broke out their scheme had become popular throughout Catholic Europe. But it was an anachronism, a mediæval romance, and as such it soon died away. The two camps of Christendom had each other to fight. The revolt of the Bohemian Protestants sealed the fate of Constantinople and Palestine.

Père Joseph's crusading ardour was equalled by his devotion to Richelieu. He and Bouthillier worked so

well on the minds of Luynes and of the King that it was decided to recall the Bishop from his exile and to send him to join the Queen-mother at Angoulême, with the understanding that while faithfully serving Her Majesty he would counsel nothing against the King's interest and the nation's welfare. The letter of recall was written by Louis XIII.'s own hand, and was conveyed to Avignon by M. du Tremblay, Père Joseph's brother. Riding post-haste, he arrived there on March 7, 1619.

Here Richelieu may tell his own story.

"As soon as I had received His Majesty's despatch, though the weather was extraordinarily bad, the snow deep and the cold extreme, I posted away from Avignon to obey my orders, led both by inclination and duty. But my haste was soon interrupted, for in a little wood near Vienne I fell in with a troop of thirty men of the Sieur d'Alincourt's guards, commanded by his captain of the guard, who met me with arms lowered, saying that they had orders to arrest me. I begged the captain to show me his powers, but he was provided with none. He replied to me that he was executing the orders of the Sieur d'Alincourt, who had his orders from the King. . . ."

The Bishop's impatient rage may be imagined. He was also greatly alarmed, for it was only too possible that the King might have changed his mind. Resistance was out of the question. M. du Tremblay rode off to Lyons, where M. d'Alincourt was governor—he was the son of the Duc de Villeroy, and had befriended Richelieu in his young days—in order to find out which of the royal commands was the latest in date. The Bishop and his servants were conveyed by the soldiers to Vienne, the stupid captain treating his prisoner "like a criminal." A sleepless night at the inn was made more hideous by bands of men fighting in the streets; a sham rescue, it seems, was devised by the captain for the greater credit of himself and his men. No wonder that the Bishop was exceedingly angry. "I thought you were ignorant," said he, "but I now see you are malicious."

In the meanwhile, M. du Tremblay had laid the King's letter before the governor of Lyons, who perceived that he had made a mistake. It had arisen from a morsel of gossip sent him by his son, who was at court when the news of the Queen's escape arrived, and to whom the Duc de Luynes had hurriedly said—"If your father could arrest the Bishop of Luçon, he would do us a great pleasure." Luynes probably forgot the words, spoken before the idea of making use of the Bishop as a mediator had even been suggested; but M. d'Alincourt made haste to act upon them, sending spies to Avignon and cleverly arranging the enterprise, "which was not a very difficult one," observes Richelieu, "there being question only of stopping a man travelling alone."

The governor did his best to "change his rigour into civility." He sent his coach to meet the Bishop on his way to Lyons, with a letter to his captain, who was much astonished and ashamed. Richelieu showed no resentment. He easily forgave the captain, dined with M. d'Alincourt at Lyons, and then pursued his journey. Its risks were not over, for the snow lay deep in the high wild country between Lyons and Limoges, and the King's troops, who were abroad in those parts, pursued the Bishop for some distance, supposing him to be the Duc d'Épernon's son, the Archbishop of Toulouse.

Richelieu arrived at Angoulême on March 27, after a journey of more than three weeks. It was again Wednesday in Holy Week. According to his own account he was not made welcome, except by Madame de Guercheville. The Duc d'Épernon and his party looked on him with doubt and suspicion as an emissary of the King. Marie de Médicis, surrounded by them, hardly dared to show her feelings of relief and joy.

CHAPTER VIII

1619—1622

The Treaty of Angoulême—The death of Henry de Richelieu—The meeting at Couzières—The Queen-mother at Angers—Richelieu's influence for peace—The Battle of the Ponts-de-Cé—Intrigues of the Duc de Luynes—Marriage of Richelieu's niece—The campaigns in Béarn and Languedoc—The death of Luynes—The Bishop of Luçon becomes a Cardinal.

NEITHER the Duc d'Épernon's haughty reserve nor the Abbé Rucellai's malignant dislike and envy could long affect Richelieu's place among the Queen-mother's counsellors. The Treaty of Angoulême was his work, in concert with the King's ambassadors, Bérulle, Béthune, the Cardinal de la Rochefoucauld, and last, not least, Père Joseph. On both sides the past was to be forgotten; Marie was to live where she chose and to dispose freely of her revenues; all her partisans were restored to the places and honours of which royal edicts had deprived them. On the other hand, she gave up the government of Normandy for the smaller one of Anjou, with 600,000 crowns in money, and the Duc d'Épernon was obliged to renounce Boulogne, for which he received an indemnity of 50,000 crowns. It was thought that the Queen and her party had the best of the bargain, and every one, even the Duc d'Épernon, gave the Bishop of Luçon credit for the compromise. He had still bitter enemies among the Queen's *entourage*, but he had also firm friends, and the best of these was his brother Henry, distinguished alike as soldier and courtier, on whom the Queen immediately bestowed the military government of her chief town and castle of Angers. She thus gravely displeased her more greedy and restless servants, men who preferred active rebellion with its chances to peace

and loyalty. The Abbé Rucellai was leader among them, and the Marquis de Thémines, captain of the Queen's guard, was one of the most ambitious. Various insulting remarks made by him came to the ears of the Marquis de Richelieu; the consequence was a duel, in which Henry de Richelieu fell, stabbed to the heart.

"Death took him," writes his brother, "but not so suddenly but that the Sieur de Bérulle, who chanced to be passing by, had time to give him absolution."

It was the sharpest grief that ever touched Richelieu. The two had been much drawn together of late years, and they seemed at this very time to be starting together on a fresh and brilliant career.

The Marquis de Thémines disappeared in disgrace from the Queen's circle, but others of his party were ready to snatch at the government of Angers and the command of the guards. They were disappointed. Marie de Médicis replaced the dead Richelieu by his uncle, Amador de la Porte, Commander of the Order of Malta, the worthy and gallant man to whom young Armand de Richelieu owed his early education as collegian and cadet. The captaincy of the guard was given to the Marquis de Brézé, whose son Armand, afterwards Duc de Fronsac, was born about this time.

Rucellai and his partisans, seeing themselves out-generalled, vanished one by one and left a clear field to the Bishop of Luçon, whose commanding influence grew every day stronger with the Queen.

A meeting and formal reconciliation between herself and her son became now the question of the moment. In preparation either for this or for the chance of civil war the Court had already moved from Paris, with a strong escort of troops, to the Loire. The first stopping-place was Amboise, where the King received news that the treaty had been concluded. At Angoulême bonfires blazed and a *Te Deum* was sung; at Tours, where the Court proceeded to establish itself for the summer, things were taken more quietly, perhaps more cynically, for the royal interview was put off from month to month, and Luynes

found that he had a formidable person to deal with in the Queen's chief counsellor. Though the treaty might be signed, there were further arrangements to be made before Richelieu would allow his royal mistress to meet her son.

In the meanwhile there was going and coming between Tours and Angoulême, where the Prince of Piedmont and his young wife, with his brother, Prince Thomas of Savoy, visited the Queen-mother and were magnificently received by her loyal friend the Duc d'Épernon.

The long hot summer dragged slowly on. The young King and Queen, Monsieur (Gaston, Duc d'Orléans, a boy of eleven), the little Princess Henriette, the Duc de Luynes and the whole Court, passed the time as best they could among the woods and rivers of Touraine and Anjou. They visited La Flêche, where the heart of Henry IV. lay in the chapel of the Jesuit College founded by him—and where its ashes are still preserved, the embalmed heart itself having been burnt by patriots in the Revolution. They made a progress among stately sun-baked châteaux, lingering at Le Lude, the owner of which, formerly the patron of Luynes and his brothers, now held the important post of governor to Monsieur. Some of the courtiers, such as Bassompierre, found reasons for riding backwards and forwards, post-haste, between Tours and Paris. The Ministers there needed watching, being apt to sell rich military appointments on their own authority.

At length Richelieu could delay no longer. He had gained for the Queen-mother some additional advantages beyond the April treaty, and he had extracted from Luynes a kind of vague promise, or at least an understanding, that he should be recommended to the Pope for a Cardinal's Hat. At present this was his chief object and desire.

At the end of August Marie de Médicis left Angoulême to rejoin her son. She was accompanied to the frontier of the Angoumois by the Duc d'Épernon, from whom she parted with tears, and she was escorted on her journey by Hercule de Rohan, Duc de Montbazon, father-in-law of Luynes, whose château of Couzières, near Tours, had

been chosen for the royal meeting. It was not large or important, being rather a country-house than a castle; but its woods and gardens were beautiful, and never, in a history not lacking in romance, was Couzières the scene of so much splendour.

The Queen-mother arrived there in the evening, with her train of ladies and gentlemen, among whom were the Archbishop of Toulouse and the Bishop of Luçon. The King left Tours the next morning on horseback, attended by five hundred princes, lords and gentlemen.

"He arrived at the said Couzières before the Queen-mother had ordered her dinner; he entered by the park gate, and the Queen at once came forth to receive him. She met him in the garden, and there they saluted and embraced each other with a great appearance of contentment on both sides; the Queen-mother wept for joy."

According to tradition, they found little to say to each other. "My son has grown taller since I saw him," said Marie. "For your service, Madame," said Louis.

They walked together, surrounded by crowds, to the house, and then, while the Queen dined, Louis strolled in the garden. Later on, another splendid cavalcade arrived from Tours—that of the reigning Queen, who "made her compliments with many demonstrations of joy" and accompanied the Queen-mother in her coach to Tours, the King flying his hawks in the open country by the way.

Marie's visit to the Court at Tours was not a success. The precedence taken by Anne of Austria offended her. And Luynes was playing a double game. He wanted the reconciliation, which would rid him of an independent adversary; he wanted to work a separation between Marie and the nobles of her party, especially the powerful Duc d'Épernon; but he watched with a jealous eye any appearance of a real understanding between her and the King. As to her friends and servants, he gave them fair words and played them false at every turn. His conduct, dishonest or diplomatic, may be judged by the fact that while the King was writing to the Pope to request that the Archbishop of Toulouse and the Bishop of Luçon should be

promoted to be cardinals, Luynes was giving the Court of Rome to understand, by a secret despatch, that only the first name mentioned by the King need be taken in earnest. These "sourdes et déloyales pratiques," as M. Avenel calls them, continued for many months, and Richelieu had few powerful advocates. Cardinal du Perron was dead; and Cardinal Bentivoglio, the Nuncio, remarked coldly on the extravagance of the Queen-mother's demand and "la sfrenata ambizione di Lusson."

The Court left Tours on its return to Paris towards the end of September. The King wished his mother to accompany him, but she refused, choosing first to take formal possession of her government of Anjou. Travelling by way of Chinon, and lingering a few days at the stately castle on the Vienne, which had been made over to her by treaty, and was commanded by the Seigneur de Chanteloube, one of her most violent partisans, she received news which deepened her displeasure and suspicion with regard to the Duc de Luynes. Her younger son's governor, the Comte du Lude, had died of fever at Tours, and now, without a word to her, Colonel d'Ornano, a creature of Luynes and a quite unfit man for the charge, was appointed in his stead. Another piece of news, sprung upon the Queen-mother without consultation or formal announcement, was that of the release of the Prince of Condé, her own and Richelieu's enemy, from Vincennes, and his reception by the King, with a royal declaration blaming those who had brought about his captivity. This may have been aimed at the Maréchal d'Ancre, but it struck the Queen. Marie understood that the first prince of the blood was now to be played off against herself in Luynes' game.

She was magnificently received at Angers. The citizens of that noble old town were as warlike, independent and keenly political now as in the days of King John, and quite as unwilling to "open wide their gates" to any unpopular sovereign. They had been amusing themselves during that summer by rioting against their excellent bishop, Fouquet de la Varenne, on some matter of ecclesiastical discipline. Commander de la Porte, with all his courage and loyalty,

was not quite the man to manage "this peevish town." He was a good-tempered chatterbox. Before the Queen's entrance into the city, Richelieu wrote a long letter to "my dear Uncle," in which, after a number of practical details as to arms and provisions, he recommended gravity and dignity in dealing with the *bourgeoisie*.

All went well on October 16, when Marie took formal possession of her city of Angers. Thousands of people received her with immense rejoicings. There was a grand military display, martial music and ringing of bells, as the Queen approached, having crossed the long arches and causeways of the Ponts-de-Cé. She did not lodge in the gloomy old castle, where Henry II. of England once held his court, but in the most beautiful house in the town, the Logis Barrault, now known to travellers as the Museum of Angers. There a Court soon gathered round her, increasing in numbers from day to day.

This state of things continued through the winter and the spring. Over and over again the King invited his mother to Paris; but she and her intimate counsellors found little satisfaction in the assurances sent by Luynes of the royal good-will. The promises went hand in hand with too many slights and affronts; and though Richelieu, according to his own account, believed the Queen-mother's right place to be at her son's Court, and though he felt that his own future lay there, he hesitated to press his opinion against that of the majority of her friends. He could not fail to see, as they did, that "there was much to be feared in the power of the favourites."

Luynes and his brothers were the first men in France. As to personal character, though spoilt by success, these three Provençal adventurers were good fellows enough; but as to greediness and ambition, Concini himself had not gone further. In order to be independent of the King's favour, Luynes had contrived to get most of the strong frontier towns of France into his hands. His brothers, one of them a Marshal of France, married two of the richest heiresses in the kingdom and took their place among the highest nobility.

"You would say," writes Richelieu in his *Memoirs*, "that France exists for them alone; that for them she abounds in all kinds of riches. . . . The governments and places that they hold seem in small proportion to those they consider their due; . . . what is not to be had for money they take by violence; . . . for their private bargains they make use of the money raised from the people for the public good. In a word, if the whole of France were to be sold, *ils achèteroient la France de la France même.*"

Add to all this the insolent, boasting speeches which came to the Queen-mother's ears, the complaints of the King's own Ministers and of the Parliament of Paris, who liked the new favourites no better than the old, and the anger of the nobles who found their pensions unpaid and the best appointments snatched from their teeth;—it was not amazing either that Marie hesitated as to leaving her town and Court in the west to place herself, personally, in the power of Messieurs de Luynes, or that Richelieu was slow in advising her to do so.

In May and June 1620 the governors of provinces were openly showing their discontent. The Duc de Vendôme could dispose of Brittany, the Duc de Longueville of Normandy, the Duc de Mayenne of Guyenne; and these three, with many others, left the Court and retired to their governments, where they began to prepare for civil war. The Duc de Rohan, in the name of the Protestant party, went so far as to advise the Queen-mother to leave Angers for Bordeaux and to assemble an army in the South. One of the chief malcontents, the Comtesse de Soissons, furious at the release of her cousin and enemy, the Prince de Condé, left Paris with her young son and came to Angers. As the summer advanced, the Queen having decided to hold her own in the west, many of *les grands* followed Madame la Comtesse, and Marie was surrounded by a crowd of restless, warlike nobles and princes, who were held back with difficulty from declaring open and instant war upon the King. Half France, apparently, was on her side—princes, populations, Catholics, Huguenots, and men of law: at one moment a successful campaign against the

King and Luynes seemed a certainty, and Angers was the centre of enthusiastic military preparations.

But Richelieu was there—a power behind all the discontented swaggerers of Her Majesty's Court. A small, strong party, including the Queen herself, believed in him. He had taken care that his friends should hold the places nearest to her: Claude Bouthillier, brother of his faithful Sébastien, was at this time her secretary. The clergy, who always influenced Marie de Médicis, were with him to a man.

He did not intend that the misunderstandings between the Queen-mother and the King, hardly mended by the passing reconciliation at Couzières, should come to actual war. It was he who prevented the move to the South; he who, through all these months at Angers, carried on negotiations with Luynes. Now, as always, he resented the domination of the princes and nobles, remaining convinced that the King must, in the last resort, be the chief authority in the kingdom. He deeply distrusted Luynes, and not altogether for personal reasons of disappointed ambition. In a sense he stood between the two parties; he did not cease to be something of a mediator; his advice to Marie de Médicis was never that of a political firebrand. Still, surrounded by firebrands—Vendôme and his like—it was difficult for the wisest counsels to prevail, and Richelieu seems to have accepted the inevitable, hoping that the warlike show made by the Queen's friends might so far impress the King as to incline him to listen to the serious complaints poured into his ears by her and by them.

The effect was not precisely this, but Richelieu was in one way content: it was not the Queen-mother who declared war. Louis XIII. himself, egged on, not by Luynes, who doubted and hesitated, but by the Prince de Condé, decided suddenly to march into Normandy and to crush his enemies by armed force.

"I will not stay in Paris," he said, "to see my kingdom made a prey and my faithful servants oppressed. . . . My conscience accuses me of no want of piety with regard to the Queen my mother, justice with regard to my people,

kind deeds with regard to the nobles of my kingdom. Therefore, *allons !*"

The words had a ring of Henry IV., and they were justified by the event. With a small army the King swept Normandy. Rouen and Caen made no resistance; the Duc de Longueville and the Grand Prieur de Vendôme fled before their royal master. The first week in August found the King on Angevin soil; on the 7th he was within two miles of Angers, on high ground commanding the road between the city and the Loire. Angers was to his right; the village and bridges of the Ponts-de-Cé to his left.

For a month, ever since the King left Paris, confusion had reigned at Angers. Negotiations had gone on furiously, for neither Louis XIII. nor Luynes wished to come to actual blows with the Queen-mother. Richelieu, in public and private, had done his best; in July, preaching before the Queen and her Court, he warned her that no faithful subject could advise her to rebel against her son, and begged her to consider that no arms could triumph over an angel-guarded King. But all this was of no avail. With hurry and rashness inconceivable, considering that neither d'Épernon, Rohan, nor Mayenne had marched to join them, the warlike party at Angers prepared for resistance.

Marie had a poor set of officers. The Comte de Soissons, supposed to be in command, was a boy of eighteen; he had courage in plenty, but no experience. The Duc de Vendôme was a clever, blustering coward; the Duc de Nemours a courageous fool; the Maréchal de Bois-Dauphin was too old for fighting. Louis de Marillac, afterwards a Marshal of France with a tragic history, did more than any of them; but he also talked more, and his plan for the defence was a foolish one. He and Vendôme attempted to fortify the whole length of the road, about two miles, between Angers and the Ponts-de-Cé, by an entrenchment which, according to Richelieu, would have needed twenty thousand men to defend it. He gave his opinion freely, but soldiers were not going to be advised by a churchman, and "nothing could divert them from their enterprise."

The sketchy fortification was not even finished, when the King's troops swooped down to the attack. His infantry fought in the flat meadows, under cover of the lines of hedgerow trees; his cavalry plunged into the Loire, a shorter way of reaching the bridges and the little old castle that defended them. Once the passage of the Loire was in the King's hands, the Queen-mother's retreat would be cut off and she would be separated from her partisans in the south country: this was why the King, advised by Condé, did not make a direct attack on the town.

The battle had hardly begun when the Duc de Retz, one of the Queen's commanders, seized with the idea that some treacherous negotiations were going on in the background, threw up her cause and rode off the field with 1500 men. The rest of the little army, about 2500 men against 14,000, kept up an uncertain struggle along the road and the bridges through some sweltering hours of the August day. A few hundred lives were lost, and it was not till evening that the royal army found itself in possession of the river branches and the little town of Ponts-de-Cé. Even then the wounded governor of the castle, M. de Bethancourt, held out there till the next morning with a garrison of ten men.

Few of the Queen's officers showed such a spirit. Long before the battle or rout was over, César, Duc de Vendôme, son of Henry IV., came galloping back into Angers with the news that all was lost.

"He entered her presence," says Richelieu, "*avec un épouvantement épouvantable*, saying, 'Madame, I wish I were dead.' On which one of her ladies, who did not lack wit replied, *fort à propos*, 'If that be really your wish you should have stayed where you were. . . .' The Duc de Vendôme was promptly followed by all the other chiefs, except the Comte de Saint-Aignan, who was taken prisoner."

So ended "la drôlerie des Ponts-de-Cé," as the wags called it. Now was the time for the peacemakers. After a few distracted hours, during which, says Richelieu, "fear was absolutely mistress of all hearts and reason had no

place," a treaty, quite amazingly favourable to the Queen-mother, was drawn up by himself and the King's envoys.

He must have wondered at the success of his own diplomacy. At first, looking round on his terrified party, on the helpless city with a royal army at her gates, he had advised Marie de Médicis to pack up her jewels and ride off by night with a few hundred light horse, fording the Loire and gaining the free country beyond, where she might make her own terms with her enemies. But the unexpected moderation of the King and Luynes made everything easy. The treaty of Angoulême was confirmed; the Queen's partisans were amnestied; the Ponts-de-Cé with their defences were restored to her; her debts were paid; she had full liberty to live where she pleased, so long as she remained in good understanding with the King and his Ministers.

All this was the work of Richelieu, in concert with Luynes. The truth was, that the rivalry of these two had reached a point where it became plain that they were necessary to each other. Luynes knew, or fancied, that the King was getting beyond his authority: the dismal boy had grown into a man and a soldier. The clever and reckless Prince de Condé made him feel what Luynes never felt or taught—the charm of war. And he was ready, more ready than Luynes wished, for a really cordial reconciliation with his mother. This took place at the old Maréchal de Cossé's magnificent Château de Brissac, south of the Loire, five days after the battle. Marie again wept tears of joy. "I have you now," said Louis, "and you shall never escape me again."

Detested as he was by the nobles and princes, shadowed by Condé, threatened by the Queen-mother's newly rising influence, Luynes thought it politic to place Richelieu, as far as possible, definitely on his side. "With great caresses," he renewed the promise of a Cardinal's Hat. A messenger was sent to Rome with a letter from the King; and this letter was soon followed by the despatch of Sébastien Bouthillier, ever faithful—not, as some writers have represented him, a private envoy from Richelieu

himself, but authorised by Louis, ready at this moment to gratify his mother in every way.

But a thousand intrigues, volumes of letters, promises made and broken in France and in Italy, still lay between the Bishop of Luçon and his ambition's crown. Bouthillier remained at Rome two years, working hard in the dark. He was made Bishop of Aire before his patron became Cardinal, but nothing checked his devoted labour. Old Paul V. was difficult and obstinate. He had enough French cardinals: the young Bishop, to whose early consecration he had half unwillingly consented, had not repaid him well: as Secretary of State, his attitude towards the Holy See had been doubtful: he had shown some inclination of late to ally the Queen-mother with the Huguenots. And besides all this it was well understood at Rome that whatever letters, whatever ambassadors, might be sent by Louis XIII., M. de Luynes was in no hurry.

While continuing his *sourdes et déloyales pratiques*—no secret to Richelieu, who endured them with sphinx-like patience—Luynes did his best to let all men believe him on the best of terms with the Queen-mother's chief counsellor. He suggested the union of their families by a marriage between his nephew, Antoine de Beauvoir du Roure, Seigneur de Combalet, and Richelieu's niece, Marie Magdeleine Vignerot du Pont-de-Courlay. She was a very pretty girl of sixteen; he was a coarse, red-faced, awkward soldier. She was not a willing sacrifice; neither was her uncle particularly eager; he hesitated long indeed for several reasons, but the Queen-mother advised him, for fear of Luynes, to consent, and the marriage was celebrated in Paris in November, during the Court festivities that followed the triumphant return of Louis XIII. from his short campaign against the Protestants of Béarn.

Madame de Combalet's unwelcome husband did not annoy her long; he was killed at the siege of Montpellier in September 1622. The young widow, a girl of independent spirit, worthy of her mother's family, at once resolved that she would not be sacrificed again. She made a vow—"un peu brusquement," says Tallemant—that she

would become a Carmelite nun. . . . "She dressed as modestly as a *dévote* of fifty. . . She wore a gown of woollen stuff, and never lifted her eyes. With all this she was a lady-in-waiting to the Queen-mother and never stirred from the Court. She was then in the full bloom of her beauty. This sort of thing lasted a long time."

It lasted till the supreme power of the Cardinal made his niece equal to the greatest ladies in France and a probable match for princes. But Madame de Combalet—better known as Madame d'Aiguillon—kept her vow so far as that she never married again.

The campaign against the Protestants of Béarn, undertaken by Louis XIII. immediately after the battle of the Ponts-de-Cé, was successful in its object of enforcing the royal edict of 1617 and restoring Church property, now held by the Huguenots, to the use of the Catholic clergy. At the same time, Henry IV.'s independent little kingdom of Béarn was formally united to the kingdom of France. All this was done with much noise and little bloodshed. It amused the King immensely. One game for another, fighting was better than falconry. Through the darkening days he galloped back to Paris, and had the additional joy of arriving before he was expected.

"Louis XIII. arrived on November 7, early in the morning, accompanied by fifty-four young nobles, riding at full speed, preceded by four post-masters sounding the horn. He rode through the city, where he was not expected. The noise made by his troop woke the citizens, they ran to the windows, and as soon as the monarch was recognised there were cries of *Vive le Roi.* The guard at the Louvre, seeing an armed troop approach, stood on the defence. They soon learned that it was the King; the palace rang with transports of joy; Louis XIII. flew to embrace his mother and his wife. The day was for him one of triumph. The shops were shut; they feasted in the streets and lighted bonfires in the evening."

But the Huguenot party did not rejoice. "As soon," says Richelieu, "as His Majesty had brought Béarn back to its duty, there was talk of the assembling of Huguenots

in many parts of the kingdom." And very swiftly the matter advanced beyond talk. From the central assembly at La Rochelle orders went out for the Protestants to rise in all quarters. In May 1621 Louis XIII. started on a campaign against them which, first under the influence of Luynes, then under that of Condé, lasted through the greater part of two years—a campaign rather of long sieges than of pitched battles, but costing many distinguished lives, among them that of the Duc de Mayenne.

At the opening of this campaign, Luynes made himself Constable of France. He was hardly qualified for the highest military office in the kingdom, being not only timid as a soldier, but absolutely ignorant of the science of war. His career, however, was now nearly at an end. His star had been for some time waning, and Saint-Simon might well say that he died at the right moment, for Louis, "whose eyes were opening," was beginning to turn against the man whom he had so heartily admired. "Il fut enfin frappé des dimensions de ce colosse formé tout-à-coup," grown to supreme power in the very moment of Concini's fall. He made perilous confidences, from which wise courtiers fled, calling the Constable "King Luynes," and complaining violently of him and his brothers. Luynes did not, as he believed, know his young King through and through.

The favourite fell as suddenly as he had risen. Three days of fever, in a village near the castle of Monheurt, which the royal army was besieging, carried off the richest and most powerful man in France. A few days later, the servants who conveyed him to his own estates for burial were playing at dice on his coffin while they rested their horses.

It is not fair to judge Luynes entirely from the point of view of enemies and rivals, even if one cannot accept the high praise bestowed on him by his admirers—M. Victor Cousin for example. From many of the vices of a favourite, Luynes was free; on the whole, his influence over Louis XIII. was rather good than bad. He was good-tempered and affectionate, though spoilt by power and terribly greedy.

Clever, if not courageous, and something of a statesman, it has been said that he "anticipated in some respects the future policy of Richelieu." He certainly saved the King from being dominated by ambitious princes, and he did his best to make obedient subjects of the Huguenots. But while he carried on war in France against them, their defeats in Germany were aggrandising Spain and the Empire and destroying that balance of power which Richelieu was to restore. If Luynes had been Richelieu, the Thirty Years War might have been stopped at its beginning.

Richelieu behaved with extraordinary discretion, even after the favourite had been removed from his path. Effacing himself in public life, he spent his time in assiduous attendance on Marie de Médicis, both at Court and in her excursions into the provinces, during one of which she paid him a visit at Coussay. To please her, they say, he learned to play the lute; and scandalous gossips found pasture in whispered tales as to the relations between the Queen and her handsome Bishop. All falsehoods, probably; but in any case, at this date his influence with her was unbounded, and as far as politics went he used it well and wisely.

In the winter of 1621–2, when Louis XIII, after the death of Luynes, turned to his mother with unusual affection, Richelieu advised the King, through her, to cease fighting his own Protestant subjects and rather, with arms or diplomacy, to check the rising, preponderating power of the House of Hapsburg. The advice was not taken. The King's mind was now ruled by the restless Condé and by the cunning old Chancellor Brûlart de Sillery and his son, Brûlart de Puisieux. For more than two years longer, the cowardly policy and the selfish intrigues of men like these were able to keep Richelieu helpless in the background. And it was not till eight months after the death of Luynes that a new Pope, Gregory XV., consented to place the Bishop of Luçon upon the roll of Cardinals.

PART III

THE CARDINAL

1622—1642

CHAPTER I

1622—1624

Cardinal de Richelieu—Personal descriptions—A patron of the arts—Court intrigues—Fancan and the pamphlets—The fall of the Ministers—Cardinal de Richelieu First Minister of France.

ON September 5, 1622—Richelieu's thirty-seventh birthday—the faithful Sébastien Bouthillier sang his *Nunc Dimittis*. Writing from Rome to his brother, he said: "It seems to me that I now have nothing more to desire in this world, since M. de Luçon is Cardinal. . . . Indeed, God must destine him for the continuing of the great works in which he has already been employed, since He has raised him to this deserved dignity in spite of the most powerful impediments."

The news arrived in France when Louis XIII. was at Avignon, his troops being engaged in that unlucky siege of Montpellier which closed his second campaign against the Protestants. A letter was immediately sent to the Queen-mother, who had spent the summer at Pougues-les-Eaux and was on her way to Lyons with her favourite Bishop in attendance. It reached her at a village on the road called La Pacaudière; there, she herself announced the news to Richelieu. From Lyons he started for Avignon, travelling down the Rhône, to thank the King in person. Three months later, the whole Court being at Lyons, his cardinal's biretta was presented to him by His Majesty with solemn

ceremony at the Archbishop's palace. The first thing he did with the red cap so long desired was to lay it at the feet of Marie de Médicis. It would always remind him, he said, that he had vowed to shed his blood in her service.

And now—if one may venture on a quotation from M. Hanotaux' vivid pages—"he moves to his right place, among the great and nobly born. His dignity is but the finishing touch. He is thirty-seven years old; thin, slender, hair and beard black, eye clear and piercing, he still has beauty, if beauty is compatible with an evident, intimidating superiority. He has the colourless complexion of a man worn by watching and suffering, gnawed by his own thoughts. It may with truth be said of him that the blade wears out the sheath; and indeed, long, slight and flexible, he is like a sword. He places the cardinal's red cap on his triangular head. He wraps himself in flowing folds of purple. Thus, all red, he enters history, realising the most complete and powerful image of a 'cardinal' that imagination and art have ever dreamed."

After this striking picture, it is interesting to read the impressions of Michelet, whose prejudices, historical and religious, hardly permitted him to be fair to Richelieu's genius, not to mention his character.

Philippe de Champagne's well-known portrait, painted at a much later date than 1622, but breathing all the stateliness, the sense of innate power, which M. Hanotaux so finely suggests, is the text for Michelet's famous discourse. Philippe's art is so true and so penetrating, he says, that it answers alike to historical knowledge and to popular impressions.

"In that grey-bearded, dull-eyed phantom with the delicate thin hands, history recognises the grandson of Henry the Third's provost who shot Guise." [N.B.—Richelieu was the Provost's son, and the Provost did not shoot Guise.]

"He comes towards you. You are not reassured. The personage has an air of life. But is it really a man? A spirit? Yes, certainly an intelligence, firm, clear, luminous shall I say, or of sinister brilliancy? If he made a few

CARDINAL DE RICHELIEU

FROM A PORTRAIT BY PHILIPPE DE CHAMPAGNE

steps forward, we should be face to face. I have no wish for it. I fear that strong head means nothing within—no heart, no bowels. I have seen too much, in my studies of sorcery, of those evil spirits who will not remain below, but return, and once again move the world.

"What contrasts in him! So hard, so supple, so entire, so broken! By what tortures must he have been ground down, made and unmade, or let us say, *désarticulé*, to have become this eminently artificial thing which walks and does not walk, which advances without apparent sight or sound, as if gliding over a noiseless carpet . . . then, arrived, overturns all.

"He gazes on you from the depth of his mystery, the sphinx in the red robe. I dare not say, from the depth of his knavery. For, contrary to the ancient Sphinx, who dies if divined, this man seems to say: 'Quiconque me devine en mourra.'"

Richelieu was now a Prince of the Church, equal to the greatest in the land. One of the ends of his "sfrenata ambizione" was gained, but he still had to wait till the incapacity of the Ministers of France compelled Louis XIII., half willingly, half unwillingly, for he admired the Cardinal's talents while he feared his dominating character, to summon him to supreme political power.

During the twenty months of waiting, Richelieu indulged the natural tastes for building and collecting which had been, no doubt, trained and encouraged by Marie de Médicis, herself so great a lover of art in its more splendid forms. At this time and a little later he bought several châteaux at no great distance from Paris—Fleury, near Fontainebleau; Bois-le-Vicomte, which he afterwards exchanged with Gaston d'Orléans for Champigny, the hereditary property of his eldest daughter, the heiress of Montpensier; Limours, which he sold, after spending large sums on beautifying it; and Rueil, near Saint-Germain. This last, when bought by the Cardinal, was merely a small country-house. He made a magnificent place of it, with moats and terraces, a beautiful park, and gardens in

the Italian style which were among the most famous of the century; cascades, fountains, arches, grottos, and a population of statues. He was a great buyer of statuary, with which all his houses and gardens were largely adorned. He posed as a very considerable patron of art, but his purchases were not made without economy; the sale of various ecclesiastical charges did not bring in an unlimited fortune. Nor was his taste always faultless, even by the pseudo-classical standard of the time.

In August 1623 he wrote a long letter to his private secretary, Michel Le Masle, Prior of Les Roches—formerly his servant at the Collège de Navarre—who had been sent to Italy on confidential business connected partly with the Queen-mother's Florentine affairs, partly with the election of a new Pope, Urban VIII. Having treated of these subjects, the Cardinal goes on to private matters of his own.

"The Sieur Franchine advises me to ask if you can send me some marble statues and a marble basin; for he says that, not being real antiques, one can have them very cheap. I particularly want a statue about three feet high, and a handsome basin a foot and a half in diameter, to put on his head. If you have this made to order the statue must hold it with both hands above his head. You will remember that, being for a fountain, the statue and the basin must be pierced. . . . M. d'Alincourt five or six months ago had five very cheap statues brought from Rome. You will inquire into the price of marble, the charges of sculptors, in order that we may judge, on your return, whether the work may better be done there or in France."

M. des Roches is then directed to find out the cost of "the following statues, in bronze":

"A Jupiter six feet high, with the face of the late King, a crown on his head and a sceptre in his hand, dressed as Jupiter *à l'antique*.

"A Juno of the same size, with the face of the Queen, the eyes slightly turned towards heaven, to which she will point with one hand.

"A god Terminus, nine feet high, made after the sculptor's fancy, to be set on a column in the midst of the garden.

"A Hercules eight or nine feet high, holding up his club in the air, pierced so that it may throw out water."

And so forth. In his reply, M. des Roches was bold enough to question his patron's taste on several points; remarking, for instance, that though water might spring forth from Samson's jawbone of an ass, it could hardly do so from the club of Hercules.

Water played a great part in the garden decoration of those days. Canals, cascades, lakes, fountains glittered and splashed everywhere; and keen amusement was found in the various tricks played by unexpected *jets d'eau*. At Rueil the Cardinal had a wonderful grotto with a cavern into which he used to beguile his unlucky guests.

"An infinity of little *jets d'eau* spring out of the ground; figures of animals, of every kind, spurt water on every side; and when one tries to hurry out to escape all this water, the doors are blockaded by heavy waterfalls; and outside the grotto other spouting figures complete the soaking of those who have passed through all this water."

Such was the delightful humour of the time. And it was not only ladies and gentlemen, finely dressed, who were subjected to these little "surprises." Walls were painted with marvellous perspectives which deceived the very birds of the air. They met their death while flying, as they thought, in the blue firmament of heaven.

Rueil was the Cardinal's favourite residence outside Paris. His town house at this time was in the fashionable Place Royale; two or three years later he moved to the Petit-Luxembourg, a charming hôtel in the Rue Vaugirard, close to Marie de Médicis' new palace. While high in her favour he had much to do with the artistic decoration of the Luxembourg. He superintended her financial affairs, and her builders, painters, furnishers worked to some extent under his orders. De Brosse, her architect, was supplied with money by his authority. Rubens,

who was now painting the magnificent series of pictures in her honour; Poussin and Philippe de Champagne, young artists not yet famous, employed in smaller work about the palace, were dependent on him. We find him inquiring through M. des Roches if Guido Reni of Bologna, then at the height of his glory, will come to France for a couple of years to paint the late King's battles in a gallery of the Queen's new palace. But the Pope and all the Italian princes were struggling for Guido, and he did not care at this time to leave his own country.

While Richelieu and the Queen-mother waited and looked on, *se ménageant*, as a French writer says, and amusing themselves with matters of art, the confusion in State affairs went on deepening. The weakness and irresolution of the Ministers were destroying, day by day, French influence in Europe, while the power of Spain and Austria went on growing. Old allies of France were biting the dust. The progress of the war in Germany was against the Protestants; the Elector Palatine, King of Bohemia, had been driven from his dominions, and James I., his father-in-law, saw no wiser course than to bid for the help of Spain by marrying his heir to the Infanta; it was in this very year 1623 that Prince Charles and the Duke of Buckingham visited Paris on their way to Madrid. Such an alliance might have sealed the fate of France and almost made her a vassal of Spain; she was indeed approaching that state, in the helpless hands of Sillery and Puisieux.

At home the Court was full of quarrels and intrigues: the King, uneasy, discontented, and wilful enough, had not the wisdom or the character needed to dismiss his useless Ministers and to put a strong man in their place. He hunted more desperately than ever, and after a year or two of *rapprochement* was again becoming estranged from Queen Anne, who for her part fell completely under the influence of the beautiful young widow of Luynes, appointed by him superintendent of her household. After the death of Luynes, this appointment was violently disputed by Madame de Montmorency, widow of the old

Constable, who had formerly held it. Madame de Luynes' chance of keeping it lay in her second marriage with the Duc de Chevreuse, which ranged the great House of Guise on her side. The whole Court, men and women, flung themselves into this quarrel; duels were fought and bribes exacted. Finally, the King and the Ministers decided to suppress the office altogether, to the bitter disappointment of both parties and the wrath of the young Queen. The Queen-mother, with her favourite counsellor, and the Prince de Condé, fallen into disfavour at Court and withdrawn in his government of Berry, were the persons of chief importance who stood aloof from the fray, each watching for some change which might throw political power into the hands of the Prince or the Cardinal.

Richelieu, for his part, was neither patient nor idle, and while outwardly absorbed by palaces, pictures, statues, was working underground with an energy hardly realised by the men of his own day. He had few confidants. Père Joseph, as always, knew and understood him best and admired him most loyally; but Père Joseph was hardly in sympathy with the instrument chiefly used by Richelieu at this time—Fancan, the famous pamphleteer.

This strange and clever being was a canon of Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois. His family, Langlois by name, had long been attached to the fortunes of the house of Richelieu, and his brother was the Cardinal's own man of business. The Sieur de Fancan had had a wider experience in the employment of the Duc de Longueville and of the Comtesse de Soissons. He had done some diplomatic work, and had developed bold opinions of his own in matters of politics and religion, posing as " bon français " in opposition to Luynes and the Spanish ultra-Catholic trend of affairs. His Protestant leanings carried him far, according to the correspondence with Germany and England discovered after his death.

For several years Fancan was high in Richelieu's favour. Unknown, anonymous, brilliant, unscrupulous, he and one or two others made public opinion in France. His pamphlets or *libelles*, in their blue covers, were sold

by hundreds on the bridges and in the book-shops of Paris. They attacked the Ministers of the moment in verse or prose full of ironical fury, personal violence and political wisdom, coarse, impudent and strong. Either in a direct or roundabout way they were addressed to the King. Sometimes France, on her dying bed, held converse with her ancient heroes; sometimes Henry the Great talked with the leaders of his time; sometimes unworthy favourites were gibbeted; sometimes the people cried to their sovereign in bitter complaint of religious tyranny and civil war, and boldly offered the counsel for which nobody asked them.

The King, the Ministers, the nobles, the literary men, the citizens, all read these pamphlets, talked of them, and did not forget them. Louis was much influenced by them; they touched his conscience and sense of truth, if they deepened the gloom in which he followed his hounds in the Forest of Saint-Germain. In the days of the Brûlarts and their successor, the Marquis de la Vieuville, while the affairs of the kingdom were slipping from bad to worse, the pamphlets not only complained more loudly than ever, they advised more strongly than ever, and the King knew well that their advice was good, however unwilling he might be to take it. They told him that there was one man in France whose hand ought to be on the helm, a man who would serve his own country and his own King, not the interests of a foreign power; a man of high courage, prudence and incomparable dexterity, as wise as he was brilliant, ready, like a burning torch, to consume himself in giving light to the State. This man would be the saviour of France, renewing the great days of Henry. It was hardly necessary to name the Cardinal de Richelieu.

Fancan only expressed the minds of all thinking men, French or foreign, private or public, who were independent of the Ministers and above political jealousy. But while thus serving France and the Cardinal, he was too careful to serve himself. He was in fact a secret agent, receiving pay from both Catholic and Protestant powers, and successfully cheating them all. The independent game became dangerous when Richelieu was supreme. In the

year 1627 it is noted in the *Memoirs* that "un nommé Fancan," a spy whose business was to betray and ruin the State, was imprisoned in the Bastille. "All his ends were evil," says Richelieu, "and the means he used to attain them were detestable and wicked. His ordinary work was the making of *libelles* in order to decry the government" (!).

A year later, Fancan died in prison. The whole story is mysterious; but Richelieu was as quick to rid himself of a suspected friend as of an open enemy.

In the winter of 1623–4 the Ministry of Sillery and Puisieux came suddenly to an end. These two men were followed into retirement by the scorn and hatred of a public which knew that they had used their power not only to weaken France in Europe, but to pile up large fortunes for themselves. The Chancellor was succeeded immediately by his colleague, M. de la Vieuville, a man of a bolder spirit and more patriotic views, but too nervous, irresolute and indiscreet to guide France through her present difficulties. Fancan, the ill-rewarded, attacked the new Minister with new pamphlets, accusing him and his family of appropriating public funds. To do La Vieuville justice, he began his rule by a very unpopular but necessary move towards economy in the system of universal pensions. It must also be remembered in his favour that he advised Louis XIII. to listen to the general voice and at this critical time to demand the services of Richelieu.

But neither he nor the King intended to give that formidable personage any real authority. Louis shrank in terror from "cet esprit altier et dominateur," replying to his mother, when she pressed him to admit her favourite to the royal Council, in such prophetic words as these—"Madame, I know him better than you do: he is a man of immeasurable ambition." With the idea of utilising the Cardinal's talents while keeping him outside power, La Vieuville invented a new subordinate Council for the management of foreign affairs, and offered him the presidency. This did not mean a seat on the King's Council, or any independent decision, for, as Richelieu pointed out in his

dry and courteous letter of refusal, any resolution passed by this new body was liable to be negatived by the King and his Council. He excused himself on the ground of ill-health and of lack of recent experience in foreign affairs, declaring that he preferred a private life to "un si grand emploi."

It was not difficult to understand these excuses. What was to be done with him? The King and La Vieuville tried to send him as ambassador to Spain, then to Rome; but he would not go. The Queen-mother obstinately pressed his claim to be admitted to the Council; she spared neither her son nor his Minister; she even held aloof from the Court in her discontent, and it seems that the fear of another serious breach with her had much influence with the King.

Towards the end of April, 1624, the complications in home and foreign affairs increasing every day, the pamphlets stinging more sharply, public and private voices waxing louder, La Vieuville found himself forced to advise the King to admit Richelieu to his Council—and this in the full consciousness that the Cardinal's rise must mean his own fall. Even now he tried, in self-defence, to limit his new colleague's power for mischief. He was to sit on the Council for the purpose of giving his opinion, but nothing more; he might use the influence, but not the authority, of a Minister of the Crown. Richelieu swept this fragile barrier easily away; indeed, from his own account, he ignored it altogether, and history would have forgotten it, but for some detailed reports sent from Paris to his masters by the Florentine ambassador.

The Cardinal's *Memoirs*, with his letter to the King, show him by no means eager to accept the offered place which had been for so long "his one thought by day, his one dream by night." All the intrigues of the affair were open to him, and if he despised and distrusted La Vieuville and the rest of the Council, he had little confidence in the jealous, uncertain temper of the King. Writing to Louis, he began by frankly acknowledging that God had given him "some enlightenment and strength of mind." These

qualities, however, were rendered unserviceable by extreme bodily weakness—so much so that he had lately besought the Queen-mother to relieve him from his light duties as superintendent of her household. Such indeed were his infirmities that he could not live without frequent excursions into the country. He added that he had many enemies, especially those of the Queen-mother, who would certainly, on his account, do their best to make mischief between their Majesties; while he assured the King that he would rather die than do anything against the welfare of the State, for which he would shed the last drop of his blood.

These same enemies would take advantage of the fact that the Cardinal's opinion might frequently differ from that of His Majesty's other Ministers; for, once on the Council, he would go his own way as to what he thought best for the King's service. He would not be merely an ornamental figure, set up "to please the public imagination and to dazzle the eyes of the world," but an honest statesman who would advise plainly and act boldly. All this he wished the King to understand, and underlying all this was the question—would Louis, as a loyal master, stand between a faithful servant and those enemies?

If, in spite of all considerations, the King remained in the same mind, the Cardinal said that he could only obey. The one condition was that, while working regularly with the rest of the Council, he must ask to be spared "the visits and solicitations of private persons," which, besides occupying his time uselessly, would complete the ruin of his health.

It was a proud, straightforward letter. In it Louis XIII. felt the first strong grasp of the hand which was to hold and lead him almost to his life's end.

Richelieu entered the Council on April 26, 1624. His first act was to demand precedence, as Cardinal, of all the other Ministers, and this was granted after long arguments; but he did not reach supreme power till the following autumn, when La Vieuville's incapable government ended in sudden disgrace. Those were dishonest times; and

it seems most probable that Richelieu, while outwardly friendly to La Vieuville, was not only opposing his uncertain policy but hastening his fall by the underground work of Fancan and other paid pamphleteers.

On August 13 the Marquis de la Vieuville carried his forced resignation to the King at Saint-Germain, was arrested by the captain of the guard and driven off to be imprisoned in the castle of Amboise. The government of France was already in the hands of Cardinal de Richelieu, and Louis XIII. had accepted the list of Ministers presented by him. The eighteen years' career had begun which changed France, making absolutism possible, bringing in the Age of Louis XIV. and as a consequence, the Revolution.

Richelieu wrote to Père Joseph, who had lately been made Provincial of the Capuchin Order:

"You," he said, "have been God's chief agent in bringing me to this place of honour. . . . I pray you to hasten your journey, and to come to me as soon as possible, to share with me the management of affairs. There are pressing matters that I can confide to no one else, nor decide without your opinion. Come then quickly to receive these proofs of my esteem."

From this time down to Père Joseph's death, in 1638, the two Eminences, the Red and the Grey, were seldom parted.

CHAPTER II

1624—1625

Richelieu's aims—The English alliance—The affair of the Valtelline—The Huguenot revolt—The marriage of Madame Henriette—The Duke of Buckingham.

IN the brilliant first chapter of Richelieu's *Testament Politique*, "Succincte Narration de toutes les grandes Actions du Roi," written not long before his death, he reminds Louis XIII. of the circumstances under which he took office in 1624; when "the Huguenots shared the State with your Majesty, the great nobles behaved as if they were not your subjects, and the powerful governors of provinces as if they were independent sovereigns. . . . Foreign alliances were despised, private interests preferred to the public good; in a word, the dignity of the Royal Majesty was lowered to such a degree, through the fault of those who had then the chief management of your affairs, that it had almost ceased to exist."

"I promised your Majesty," he continues, "to use all my endeavours and all the authority that you might be pleased to give me, to ruin the Huguenot party, to abase the pride of the nobles, to bring all your subjects back to their duty, and to exalt your name to its proper place among Foreign Nations. I represented that for the attainment of these happy ends, your entire confidence was necessary to me."

The Cardinal had that confidence, without which indeed he could have done nothing. Experience had taught him that however low "the Royal Majesty" might have fallen, it was and would remain the centre of power, the incarnation of France. He was therefore resolved that his

influence with the King should be personal, as well as political. He had long and thoroughly studied the strange, shy, gloomy, conscientious young man of four-and-twenty, on whom his own fate and that of the nation depended. He knew that Louis was quite capable of thinking and judging for himself, and he made full use not only of his personal magnetism, but of all the clever political argument which his genius suggested. Louis was convinced—and the conviction went on deepening with years—that his own honour and the well-being of his kingdom were safe in the hands of the new Minister, so frail, keen, brilliant, and superbly sure of himself. That the King ever came to love Richelieu is hard to believe, considering all the past, in spite of affectionate letters; but he certainly admired and trusted him.

The acceptance of the English marriage for Madame Henriette Marie of France was Richelieu's first step in the way of return to Henry IV.'s foreign policy. The idea of an English alliance, of course, was not originally his. Long before Henry's youngest child was born, a marriage had been suggested between one of her elder sisters and Henry, Prince of Wales. At the same time, Louis the Dauphin was to have been betrothed to Princess Elizabeth, James the First's eldest daughter—a strange destiny for the Protestant heroine, the "Queen of Hearts," "th'Eclipse and Glory of her kind!" But Henry's liking for England seems to have cooled considerably as time went on, and his latest political turn, doubtfully and unwillingly made, was in the direction of the Spanish marriages brought about by Marie de Médicis. As for Henriette Marie, only six months old when her father died, he had carelessly promised her hand to the young son of his cousin the Comte de Soissons. He would probably have broken this promise. The Queen-Regent had no scruples in doing so, to the rage and disappointment of Monsieur le Comte.

The present negotiations in their earlier stages were not Richelieu's work. He was not in power in 1620, when Luynes, a poor diplomatist, tried to turn the mind of the English King towards an alliance with France rather than

with Spain; nor in 1623, when the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Buckingham, those two "venturous knights" lingering incognito in Paris on their way to Madrid, witnessed a ballet at the Louvre in which Princess Henriette, now thirteen years old, was dancing. It was afterwards said that Charles fell in love with the graceful little lady on that occasion, so that his failure to capture the Infanta of Spain troubled him little personally. As to Buckingham, who with all his faults and frivolities had some of the ideas of a statesman, he was already inclined to the French alliance, seeing in it the one means of defending the foreign Protestants and balancing the power of Spain. Through the winter of 1623–4, envoys of more or less dignity were passing between London and Paris, and the marriage was talked of openly. All this time, no doubt, Richelieu was in favour of it, and his influence, as the Queen-mother's chief adviser, set that way; but long delays dragged out the affair, even after the coming of the English Ambassadors Extraordinary, Lord Holland and Lord Carlisle. The chief difficulty, as with Spain, was the religious question. La Vieuville's weakness as to this, in Richelieu's opinion, nearly wrecked the negotiations. After he himself became a Minister in April, there was no more danger that France would, in Carlisle's words, "be ridden with a discreet high hand." The delays were of Richelieu's causing, and the "high hand" was that of France. He meant to oppose Spain and the Empire and to assist—with discretion—the German and Dutch Protestants; but he also meant the Catholic Church to be honoured and protected in England and triumphant in France. In August, when he had arrived at supreme power, the English ambassadors found that there was no more dallying and giving way. If they wanted the alliance, they must accept the conditions, and very stringent these were. By the treaty of November 1624, subject to the Pope's most unwillingly granted dispensation, Madame Henriette was to go to England with an establishment of French Catholics, including a bishop and twenty-eight priests, and was to have a "large chapel" in every one of her residences; while

all imprisoned English Catholics were to be released, all confiscations of their property reversed, and safety and toleration assured them for the future. Louis XIII. and Richelieu had to consent that these last articles should be secret, since the King of England declared it impossible to present them to his Parliament.

Another difficult affair that called for Richelieu's management was that of the Valtelline.

The Val Tellina, rich in vineyards, through which the river Adda, descending from its mountain source near Bormio, runs down its stony bed to fall into the Lake of Como, had long been a bone of contention for the Powers. It belonged to the Grison Leagues, old allies of France, and the first difficulties arose when its Catholic inhabitants rebelled against the oppressions of their Protestant masters. This was in 1620. On a Sunday long remembered the Protestants of the valley were massacred. Then a Spanish army came up from Milan to stand by the Catholics in their struggle with the enraged Grisons. The Thirty Years War was already two years old, and the Val Tellina was of European importance as the best and almost the only passage for armies between the Milanese and the Tyrol. Here the Emperor and the King of Spain could join hands, much to the disadvantage of the Protestant powers and of France. Naturally therefore the Spaniards took possession of the valley and its strongholds, and the Grison Leagues resisted them in vain.

France interfered, but only in the way of diplomacy. By the Treaty of Madrid, in 1621, the new Spanish forts were to be razed and the valley restored to the Grisons, who promised amnesty and toleration. But this treaty was not carried into effect. Louis XIII. was too deeply engaged in fighting his own Protestants to undertake the defence of Protestants in Switzerland, and France held aloof under her weak Ministers while the Archduke Leopold swooped down upon the Grisons and once more deprived them of the Val Tellina, besides forcing them to surrender to Austria the Engadine and other districts.

Still France hesitated, and it was only the strong

remonstrances of the Duke of Savoy, the Venetian ambassador, and the Constable de Lesdiguières—himself a converted Huguenot—who saw the valley made an armed highway for the enemies of France, Venice, and Savoy, that brought Louis to insist on the carrying out of the Treaty of Madrid. In the winter of 1622–3—Richelieu being in the background, and advising the King through Marie de Médicis, to the displeasure of the Brûlarts—the three Powers made a league to this end, agreeing to raise an army of forty thousand men.

The valley was too precious to be easily renounced by Spain, and yet she did not wish to fight France and Savoy. Philip IV. and his Ministers found a way out by calling Pope Gregory XV. to the rescue, and the warlike ardour of France was easily cooled. The Treaty of Madrid was laid aside, and Louis XIII. consented that the fortresses of the Valtelline should be placed in the hands of the Pope, pending their demolition and a new arrangement of the whole affair. It was understood that the Spaniards and Austrians would no longer pretend to any rights over the valley, and that all foreign occupation would cease in three months' time.

Nothing of the sort happened. Gregory XV. was succeeded by Urban VIII. in the summer of 1623. When, after a long delay, the new Pope invited Spain to fulfil her engagements, she declined absolutely. The free passage of the Valtelline for her troops was a military advantage not to be given up. The Pope did not insist: the action of surrendering the Valtelline, with its Catholic population, to the tender mercies of the Protestant Grisons, seemed to him wicked and impious.

This was the state of things in the autumn of 1624, when Cardinal de Richelieu came into his own. There were surprises in store both for the Pope and for Spain. Philip IV. and his Ministers had little fear of France; the policy of his royal brother-in-law had as yet been anything but energetic. Urban VIII. and the rest of the Catholic world found it hard to believe that a Cardinal would fight against Rome.

The Pope was asked, in a polite but peremptory fashion, either to destroy the fortresses or to deliver them back to Spain, with whom France would then deal direct; and in any case to withdraw his troops at once from the valley. He temporised and negotiated in Spain's favour. Richelieu's patience was soon exhausted. The early winter saw Switzerland overrun by French troops under the Marquis de Cœuvres, who drove the Austrians back into the Tyrol, swooped down by Poschiavo on Tirano, and in a few weeks' time had taken all the forts and driven the papal troops out of the Valtelline.

In the course of the same winter Richelieu took advantage of a quarrel between the Duke of Savoy and the Republic of Genoa to support the Duke with an army under Lesdiguières, aided by a Dutch fleet, in an attack on Genoese territory. Richelieu had indeed no intention of conquering Genoa or of strengthening Savoy; but the Republic was Spain's richest and most useful ally, and such an attack could not fail to harass her terribly while she was losing her position in the Valtelline, and to weaken her power in Italy.

At this crisis in foreign affairs discontent at home rose furious, and might have wrecked a smaller man. Richelieu found himself suddenly beset with a swarm of enemies, private and public. The campaign in favour of the Swiss Protestants, the strong opposition to Rome and to Spain, enraged society and the Church; and while this storm was only beginning to grumble, the French Huguenots broke out into sudden, most untimely rebellion.

The Treaty of Montpellier had left them discontented. Their last war had ended, in the autumn of 1622, with submissions and renunciations hard to be borne by so proud and independent a party. If the King was bound to observe the Edict of Nantes, which assured them toleration, they, on their side, were forced to dismantle their fortifications, and to cease from all assemblies not strictly religious. Two strong places only, La Rochelle and Montauban, were left in their hands. The Duc de Rohan, now their chief leader—the old Duc de Bouillon

died in 1623—was deprived of his provincial governments, though indemnified by smaller posts and large sums of money. Also the King promised the destruction of Fort Louis, built by him to command the entrance to the harbour of La Rochelle. This last article of the treaty was not carried out: hence great displeasure in the Protestant camp.

In the eyes of some politicians, notably the Pope's Nuncio, the Peace of Montpellier, with its concessions to rebel subjects, was somewhat disgraceful to the King of France. Richelieu was of the same opinion, to judge by his own words. But he was too wise not to let the sleeping dogs of the kingdom lie. Civil war was at all times the last thing he desired; and at this moment, with two foreign campaigns on his hands,—campaigns against the great enemies of Protestantism—the active disloyalty of the Duc de Rohan moved him to high indignation.

Writing on January 12, 1625, to M. de la Ville-aux-Clercs, Ambassador Extraordinary in London—employed, with the Marquis d'Effiat, in the final arrangements for the royal marriage—Richelieu says:

"You know how the Huguenots have cut out work for us, sending ships to sea and seizing the Isle of Ré. . . . Never was so bad an action as this of the Antichrist brothers, who, seeing the King at war for the interests and dignity of the Crown, take up arms to trouble the feast."

To the French ambassador at Rome—M. de Marquemont, Archbishop of Lyons and afterwards Cardinal—Richelieu writes on January 27:

"The news you have heard of the Huguenots is only too true: incited by the devil or others equally bad, they have shown their evil will by a surprise entry into the Port of Blavet, landing with cannon, with which they battered the fort for two days. . . . The King has news that, the whole province hurrying against them, they have already re-embarked in order to escape, and are carrying off two or three ships of M. de Nevers, which were in the harbour."

The "*frères antichristi*" were Henry Duc de Rohan and his brother Benjamin, Duc de Soubise. They were the two actively distinguished leaders who remained to the

Huguenot party: Le Plessis-Mornay was dead; the Duc de Lesdiguières had changed his religion and become Constable of France; the Marquis de la Force, a brave and very provincial old soldier, and Gaspard de Coligny, Duc de Châtillon, held loyally to the Peace of Montpellier, and each accepted a Marshal's bâton from the King; the new Duc de Bouillon was content to watch events from his north-eastern citadel of Sedan.

Thus the interior peace of France was largely in the hands of the brothers Rohan, of whom the younger was a firebrand, an adventurer, never happy unless employed in some foolhardy enterprise, though capable, on occasion, of running away; one of those restless spirits to whom religion meant opposition to law and authority; the very type of the fighting Huguenot, robber on land and pirate by sea. Such men, to whom nothing was sacred, were indeed to be found under both religious banners, one and all the opponents of royalty and of Richelieu.

Henry, first Duc de Rohan, was a different kind of person. A sincere Protestant, he carried out in his life the stern morality of his creed. He had a genius for war, wrote brilliantly on tactics, but was a diplomat as well as a soldier, and those who knew him best saw in that thoughtful character as much personal ambition as religious conscience. Both brothers were influenced by their ancestry. They were descended from the old Kings of Navarre through Isabeau, daughter of Jean d'Albret; and if the sons of Henry IV. died childless, which seemed not unlikely, Henry de Rohan was the next heir to the kingdom of Navarre. He had been acknowledged as such, in his youth, by Henry IV. What the Spaniards had left of that kingdom was now united to the crown of France. Thus the Duke may very well have seen in himself a possible pretender, a rival to Condé and the Bourbons, at a dreamed-of moment when the strongest would win.

And his mother, Catherine de Parthenay-Soubise, was not the woman to discourage such lifelong fancies in her sons. Fairy blood, that of the Lusignans, ran in her veins; "grande rêveuse," her absence of mind and many oddities

were the talk of Paris; her favourite vision was that of the Duc de Nevers and Père Joseph, a crusade against the Turks. We are told that she was not pleased when Henry IV., whom she disliked, made her eldest son a Duke, her husband being the eleventh Viscount of his name. According to the proud old family motto, that name alone made its bearer a King's equal.

Madame de Rohan had more reason to be discontented at her son's marriage, arranged by Henry, with Marguerite de Béthune, daughter of the Duc de Sully, then a mere child. They were married in the Protestant temple at Charenton, and the story goes that the famous and waggish minister Du Moulin asked aloud, when the little girl in her white frock was led up to him—"Do you present this child to be baptised?" The white robe of innocence did not long suit the Duchesse de Rohan, and never had a good man a worse wife. Very pretty, attractive and clever, she led a life worthier of the Valois Court than of the fine old Huguenot houses of Sully and Rohan. Not even Madame de Chevreuse, herself a Rohan by birth, was more free of moral restraint. The Duc de Rohan, concerned with greater matters, seemed superbly unconscious of his wife's love-affairs, and turned away coolly from the shocked pastors who tried to enlighten him. In a political sense, they were one. Whenever her husband needed her help, Madame de Rohan sent her lovers to the right-about, plotted for him, followed him in his campaigns. In the winter of 1625, when the Duc de Rohan was trying to support his brother's naval raid by a revolt in Languedoc, Aubery describes how "the Duchesse de Rohan his wife acted with no less vigour, and, as if it were her design to throw terror into vulgar minds, travelled often by night with torches, in a mourning coach drawn by eight black horses."

"Suscités par le diable ou quelques autres qui ne valent pas mieux." No doubt the Cardinal had accurate knowledge of the influences, diabolical or other, which had brought about the Huguenot rising at this awkward moment. It was partly the work of the angry people of La Rochelle, who saw their town perpetually threatened

by royal forts on land and their harbour watched by royal ships at sea. They counted on the help of the Protestant powers, England and Holland, to make a favourable bargain with the King's government, already entangled in the Swiss and Genoese campaigns. And they were backed up in a quarter which might well have been unexpected. The money that provided Soubise with ships came from Spain. Rohan and he, more than once treating secretly with the enemies of France, may not have deserved Richelieu's epithet of "Antichristi," but were certainly anti-patriotic.

As the Cardinal wrote to the ambassadors, the Duc de Soubise, not content with seizing the Isle of Ré and thus commanding La Rochelle, had sailed north and pounced on the harbour of Blavet, on the Brittany coast, at the mouth of the river below Hennebon. The harbour had been fortified by Louis XIII. in the former civil wars, and was known as Port Louis. Six battleships were now lying there, five of which did not belong to the King, but had been lent him by the Duc de Nevers. Soubise took the town and the ships—including the famous great *Vierge*, of eighty guns—and attacked the castle, which held out long enough for the Duc de Vendôme, governor of Brittany, to come to the rescue. Soubise then escaped to sea, but with difficulty, carrying four of his prizes with him; and sailing like a bold pirate southward, taking the island of Oléron as a base for his operations, became a terror to vessels of war or merchandise all along the coast. Later on he stormed up the Gironde in support of the Duc de Rohan, who had already set Guienne and Languedoc in a blaze.

All this trouble, arising at such an unwelcome moment, caused terrible agitation among the King's councillors. Most of them, says Richelieu, were "si éperdus," that they saw no choice but between immediate peace with Spain and submission to all the Huguenot demands. He himself would have no such craven yielding to the storm. With little slackening of energy in the Swiss and Genoese campaigns, he set to work to crush the revolt at home,

acting on the medical maxim that a small internal injury is more to be feared than one greater and more painful, but external only.

His understanding with England and Holland now bore some fruit. Their statesmen, less consistent than their populations, did not refuse to support him against his rebels, in spite of their religion. England, already on the edge of war with Spain, sent eight ships to the help of the French Government; the Dutch fleet was diverted from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic, and twenty French ships made up a fleet of fifty or sixty sail, commanded in chief by Duke Henry de Montmorency, High Admiral of France. Richelieu had not much faith in this young man, the late Constable's only son and the Princesse de Condé's brother—one of the handsomest and boldest of the fierce order that the Cardinal meant to subdue. But as far as Montmorency was concerned the time of vengeance was not yet. He and the Dutch Admiral, after a long fight with Soubise on the sea, scattered his fleet, took the islands of Ré and Oléron, and came very near to capture La Rochelle itself.

Here Richelieu held his hand. He was not yet ready for that great siege, or for the final crushing of the Protestant power in France.

On May 11, when the Huguenot revolt was in full swing, Princess Henriette, low of stature, with lovely black eyes and obstinate mouth, was married by proxy at Notre Dame to the new King of England. A high stage was set up outside the west doors of the cathedral, and on this the ceremony was performed, after the pattern of the wedding of Henry IV. and Marguerite de Valois: a Protestant prince could not be married within the walls. Here may have lain some foretaste of sadness for her who was to be known as *la Reine Malheureuse*, though she was ready, with strong religious faith, to accept the almost missionary character of Queen of a heretic country, an Esther for her own people. But the tones of warning were silent that day. She had not even received the letter in which Marie de Médicis, inspired by the Père

de Bérulle—not by Richelieu, though he claims that credit in his *Memoirs*—laid down in eloquent sentences the duties of her new life. For the bride of fifteen all was joy and festival. King Charles's proxy was Claude, Duc de Chevreuse, of royal blood, a younger son of Henry le Balafré and brother of Charles, Duc de Guise. He was one of the handsomest and most splendid of Louis XIII.'s courtiers, and his famous wife, the widow of Luynes, Queen Anne's favourite lady, possessed all the magnificent confiscated jewellery of the unlucky Maréchale d'Ancre. This gorgeous pair were to escort the young Queen to England.

After the ceremony, at which the Duc de Chevreuse acted his part of a Protestant prince to admiration, a royal banquet was held in the hall of the Archbishop's palace, then close to the cathedral.

"There were bonfires in all the streets of Paris," writes Richelieu, "and lights in the windows, which turned night into brilliant day. The Cardinal, who with such pains and prudence had brought this alliance to a happy end, feeling obliged to show his contentment, which exceeded that of all others, presented their Majesties and the Court with a supper and fireworks which were worthy of the magnificence of France."

The Cardinal's high contentment did not last long. At the moment there were reasons for it: slight hopes, which soon faded, of a swift end to the revolt; the arrival of the Pope's nephew and legate, Cardinal Barberini, to negotiate a peaceful settlement of the Valtelline affair. Then all was upset, in Richelieu's view, by the descent on Paris of the Duke of Buckingham.

Ostensibly, that great personage came as his master's special representative, to fetch home Charles's Queen. In Paris "his Person and Presence was wonderfully admired and esteemed" . . . "he out-shined," as Lord Clarendon tells us, "all the bravery that Court could dress itself in, and over-acted the whole Nation in their own most peculiar Vanities."

Cardinal de Richelieu's "pains and prudence" had not

been in order to the satisfying of this gentleman, who unluckily ruled both fashion and politics in England, and he was by no means disposed to make peace or war at Buckingham's bidding. For the Duke's visit was far from being one of mere courtesy. He had two political ends in view: first, to defeat the Pope's legate and to keep France at war with Spain; second, to make so close an alliance with France that she would be bound to fight for the restoration of the Elector Palatine to his dominions. Richelieu would have none of this state of bondage. Louis XIII., led by him, stood firm and independent. He would accept peace with Spain when he judged it advisable, and he would not throw himself into the war in Germany, except by allowing Count Mansfeldt, on the Protestant side, to be reinforced by a couple of thousand French horse at the expense of those who employed them. This concession, which does not sound great, was made with the view of keeping England in a good temper, at least so long as the King of France had his Huguenot rebels to contend with.

Buckingham pressed for peace in that direction, but was answered, with sufficient haughtiness, that in the interest of the King his master he ought to be silent. "For no prince," said Richelieu, "should assist, even by words, the rebellious subjects of another."

Buckingham promised, swaggered, threatened a little. He would send a hundred ships to ravage the coast of Spain, and would land an army of 15,000 men in Flanders, if King Louis would supply 6000 cavalry. He would conquer Artois and make a present of it to France. But if the French received these offers coldly, England would seek the friendship of Spain and recover the Palatinate by treaty.

To which Richelieu replied that it was for the English to consider whether it would be for their advantage to send a fleet to Spain and an army to Flanders; that his King advised them to think well beforehand whether these would be the best means of recovering the Palatinate. If the same result could be gained by treaty, he advised

them to prefer the latter course. As to the polite offer of Artois, the King of France had no wish for conquests, and in marrying his sister to the King of England desired no acquisition but his friendship.

Between the lines of the *Memoirs* it is easy to read Richelieu's scornful dislike of the splendid upstart who ruled England and tried to play the game of politics with him; a dislike which deepened into distrust and uneasiness later, when Buckingham's cause for quarrel with the French government had become that of a passionate, disappointed man rather than that of a politician, however foolhardy.

The story of Henrietta's progress to Calais has often been told; a story in which the interest quite leaves Charles's little bride to centre itself round the beautiful young Queen of France and the love-affair in which Buckingham, at least, was desperately in earnest. Her husband's unkind neglect might have given the Queen every excuse, even if her dearest friend, Madame de Chevreuse, had not been a standing example of the morals favoured by society. It is certain that Anne was strongly attracted by the great charmer of his age; but religion and Spanish dignity, not to mention the care of her elder ladies and the watchfulness of the Court, were a sufficient protection. Only the most notorious scandal-mongers dared to hint otherwise.

Lord Clarendon's very discreet account of the affair sets forth plainly the political result of Buckingham's anger.

"In his Embassy in France . . . he had the Ambition to fix his Eyes upon, and to dedicate his most violent Affection to, a Lady of a very sublime Quality; Insomuch as when the King had brought the Queen his Sister as far as he meant to do, and delivered her into the hands of the Duke to be by him conducted into England; the Duke, in his Journey, after the departure of that Court, took a resolution once more to make a visit to that great Lady, which he believ'd he might do with much privacy. But it was so easily discover'd, that provision was made

for his Reception; and if he had pursued his Attempt, he had been without doubt Assassinated; of which he had only so much notice, as serv'd him to decline the Danger. But he swore, in the instant, 'that he would See and Speak with that Lady, in Spight of the Strength and Power of France.' And from the time that the Queen arriv'd in England, he took all the ways he could to Undervalue and Exasperate that Court and Nation, by causing all those who fled into England from the justice and displeasure of that King, to be receiv'd and entertain'd here, not only with ceremony and security, but with bounty and magnificence; and the more extraordinary the Persons were, and the more notorious their King's displeasure was towards them (as at that time there were very many Lords and Ladies in those circumstances) the more respectfully they were receiv'd, and esteem'd. He omitted no opportunity to Incense the King against France, and to dispose him to assist the Hugonots, whom he likewise encourag'd to give their King some trouble. . . ."

Among these "extraordinary Persons" was the Duc de Soubise, who fled to the English coast after his defeat at sea and remained in England, welcome alike to lords and commons; doing his best the while to shake down the already tottering friendship between Charles I. and his royal French brother-in-law.

CHAPTER III

1626

Peace with Spain—The making of the army and navy—The question of Monsieur's marriage—The first great conspiracy—Triumph of Richelieu and death of Chalais.

THE Duke of Buckingham had to do with a mind immeasurably superior to his own; and if he, in the autumn of 1625, was pushing on a quarrel with France, Cardinal de Richelieu's game, for the present, was to disappoint him. The English fleet, playing at piracy, carried off French merchant ships: English influence led the Dutch to recall the fleet they had lent to France; a serious annoyance to Richelieu, who had not yet had time to make a navy. He had other reasons for being angry with King Charles, who, from Henrietta's first arrival in England, had frankly shown his dislike of the "Monsers" she brought with her and seemed ready to treat all his marriage promises, open or secret, as waste paper. But Richelieu intended England to be the powerful mediator between Louis XIII. and the Huguenots; to this end, he ignored a whole series of pin-pricks, invited English ambassadors to Paris, and let it be understood that France, once at peace internally, would be ready to give active help in Germany.

That bleeding wound of civil war had so weakened the campaign in North Italy as to make it ineffectual. An Austrian force, pouring down over the Saint-Gothard, had reinforced Genoa, and Lesdiguières, with no fleet to support him, had been obliged to retire. But the Spaniards had failed to recover the Valtelline. It remained for the

present in the hands of the French; a difficult question to be settled with the Pope, and Cardinal Barberini's mission to that end resulted in nothing but words. He went back to Rome, in high discontent, at the end of September, and Richelieu, so far from slackening his hold, sent the Maréchal de Bassompierre to reinforce the Marquis de Cœuvres in Switzerland. It seemed that there was nothing to be done in the Catholic interest with "le Roy du Roy," the man people already called atheist, Huguenot, "le Cardinal de la Rochelle."

This was not quite the case, however. Though Richelieu would not treat with Cardinal Barberini, he had already entrusted his other self, Père Joseph, with powers for negotiating with Urban VIII. at Rome. At the moment, the mission of Barberini made this impossible, but it seems that the Capuchin—never publicly mentioned in State affairs, but always to be found pulling the strings for Richelieu in the background—passed on his instructions to the Comte du Fargis, French ambassador at Madrid, who set to work on the hard task of framing a treaty to please everybody—Spain, Austria, the Pope, the Grison Leagues and France—but notably that secret party in France, headed by the Queen-mother, M. de Marillac, afterwards Chancellor, and Père de Bérulle, among whom Richelieu's opponents were now to be found. M. du Fargis, in his communications with the Spanish Minister, Count Olivarez, considered rather the wishes of this French ultra-Catholic party, reported to him by his brilliant and mischievous wife, now in Paris, than the intentions of Richelieu. The consequence was, that several attempts at a treaty were scornfully repudiated by the French government, and it was not till May 1626 that any agreement was arrived at. A nominal sovereignty over the Valtelline was restored to the Grisons, and Spain renounced any right of passage. The Catholic religion was established in the valley, and the forts were restored to the Pope, to be demolished by his troops. All parties were fairly satisfied, except the Duke of Savoy, whose quarrel with Genoa was coolly set aside without any reference to him. And the English

government, which had almost forced the French Huguenots to accept an unprofitable peace from Louis XIII. in February, saw with immense irritation the conclusion of peace between France and Spain. This was not the end they had worked for; and the secret diplomacy of Richelieu was regarded in England as a dishonourable trick.

He cared not at all. Peace was necessary to him at this time: how necessary, a glance at his home projects is enough to prove. He now set to work upon them in earnest; backed up by public opinion, both in 1625 and 1626, in the shape of assemblies of the Notables—princes, dukes, and peers of France, archbishops and bishops, crown officers, presidents of courts of law, and the provost of the merchants of Paris. At these assemblies the chief personages of the kingdom were invited to advise the King. Richelieu took care that their advice should accord with his own, for his day of absolute power was only dawning. He had his way with them: as a body, they gave their consent to his policy at home and abroad.

The creation of a navy was his most popular measure. No longer should the King of France be forced to borrow ships where he could, to protect French coasts and French merchant vessels against "pirates of all nations." Michel de Marillac, if he had secretly opposed Richelieu in the affair of the Spanish treaty, was heartily with him here, and he was one of those whose eloquence led the Notables to vote with enthusiasm the building or purchase of forty-five battle-ships. The sea-going trade of France, its enormous losses and dangers under the present system, was the text which inspired Marillac.

"We have everything we need," he cried, "to make us strong at sea. We have wood and iron for ship-building, linen and flax for sails and cordage; sailors in abundance, who will serve our neighbours if not employed at home; the best ports in Europe . . . and yet our neighbours rob us of our fishing . . . pirates ravage our coasts and carry off the King's subjects captive to Barbary."

It was time, he said, that France should wake from her lethargy of many years.

The words of Marillac on this occasion were the thoughts of Richelieu, and he set about carrying them out in his own way. He had already taken to himself supreme power over naval affairs, by buying out the Duc de Montmorency and presenting himself with letters patent which conferred the new office of Grand Master and Superintendent-General of Navigation and Commerce.

Authority over the army—which he made almost entirely from small and chaotic beginnings till it became the force that conquered at Rocroy—was gained by Richelieu through the abolition of the old office of Constable of France. The Duc de Lesdiguières, its last holder, died in 1626, and military supremacy under the King passed into the hands of a War Minister—that is to say, into those of Richelieu himself.

Equally difficult with the creation of army and navy were the necessary reforms in the Church, in finance, in local government, and the establishment throughout France of order and the royal authority. The Cardinal shrank from nothing. Many of the details of his projected work were never carried out, and it has been well said that he was a more successful statesman abroad than at home, where a mass of privileges and vested interests, with the growing necessity for heavy taxes, were millstones hung round a financial reformer's neck. Richelieu's success in crushing the great nobles brought no benefit to the common people; it was all for the advantage of the King. Among his early dreams were those of encouraging agriculture and manufactures after the example of Henry IV. and Sully; but he did little good of this kind, except in the way of colonisation. Under his protection new French commercial companies, after a long struggle with England, gained a more secure footing in Canada and the West Indies.

For the first few years of Richelieu's ministry he was working against tremendous odds. His health was terribly bad. All through the winter of 1625-6 he suffered from fever and constant headaches, so that he was often forced to leave Paris in the midst of his work and to fly for rest

and change to one of his country-houses. Once at least, when summoned back on public affairs to the Petit-Luxembourg, he writes to Claude Bouthillier: "I am so persecuted by my head . . . my pain is excessive. . . . I am so persecuted by my head, I know not what to say. But even were I worse, I would rather die than not drag these important affairs to a conclusion."

At this very time, in the spring of 1626, the discontent he had already caused in high quarters began to show its teeth, and the first of many conspiracies was formed against him.

He had very few sincere friends except in his own family, and among the men who worked with him, and whom he entirely trusted. Marie de Médicis, indeed, had not yet actually broken with him; they were apparently on the same terms as before. But in actual fact the distance between them was widening every day. Influenced by Bérulle, the Queen-mother had become more *dévote*; she disapproved of the long delay in making peace with Rome and Spain, and of the treaty with the Huguenots, helped on by the intervention of heretic England. She was angry with England for other reasons: the presumption of Buckingham, the treatment of the young Queen's French household. All these things were turning her mind against Richelieu's policy. And he was not very diplomatic with regard to his patroness. He showed too plainly perhaps that her friendship was no longer of the highest importance to him. He had gained what he wanted; he was the first man in France, indispensable to the King. Ill, impatient, overworked, straining every nerve to keep his hold on affairs and his influence with his royal master, it was hardly strange that he should fail a little in grateful attention to a stupid elderly woman, even though he owed her everything.

But Marie de Médicis was not responsible for this first great "storm," as the Cardinal calls it in his *Memoirs*. The clouds rolled up round the King's young brother, Monsieur, Duc d'Anjou, and were brought to a head by Richelieu's decision that he should marry Mademoiselle de

GASTON DE FRANCE, DUC D'ORLÉANS

Montpensier, the only child of the last lord of Champigny and the present possessor of his enormous wealth.

The plan of this match was nothing new. Henry IV. and Marie de Médicis had betrothed the heiress to their son Nicolas, Duc d'Orléans, when both were infants. After the boy's early death it was proposed that he should be replaced by his younger brother, Gaston, but there was no formal contract. The Queen had never renounced the idea, specially welcome to her because of her friendship with the girl's mother, the Duchesse de Montpensier, afterwards Duchesse de Guise, and of the warm affection she had always felt for Mademoiselle de Montpensier herself, who was now twenty-one, three years older than Gaston, and of a singularly sweet character.

As to Monsieur, he has been described often enough. Handsome, intelligent, weak, foolish, restless, impressionable, gay and agreeable, false and cowardly, he inherited little of Henry IV. but his vices and frivolities. He had been ill-trained by his governor, Colonel—now Maréchal—d'Ornano, the Corsican officer who had won his post by devotion to Luynes at the time of Concini's death. Since those days d'Ornano had owed some gratitude to Cardinal de Richelieu, and he was now superintendent of his former pupil's household. The Cardinal had lately displeased him by refusing to admit him, with Monsieur, to the royal Council; and disappointed personal ambition was the chief cause of his throwing in his lot with those who were bent on making Monsieur the head of an opposing party in the State. On the whole, d'Ornano was probably more foolish than dangerous. Great ladies did what they pleased with him; and he seems to have confided his dreams of power, both for his young master and for himself, to no less a person than Père Joseph, the actual ear of Richelieu.

But the centre of the cyclone was not in Monsieur's own household: it was in the heart of the young childless Queen. Long afterwards Anne of Austria told Madame de Motteville that she had done all she could to prevent Monsieur's marriage with Mademoiselle de Montpensier, believing that marriage to be entirely against her own

interests. Already she was neglected enough, unhappy enough. Louis XIII., if not the worst of husbands, was sulky, suspicious, resentful. The Queen and her intimate friends lived in an atmosphere of gloom, almost of persecution, under the shadow of the King and his Minister. Louis hated Madame de Chevreuse, and with some reason if it is true that her wild spirits had led Anne into romping games which more than once cost France a Dauphin.

But it seemed to the Queen that Gaston's proposed marriage made her position hopeless. If he had children, heirs to the crown, his wife would certainly be regarded as the first woman in France, and the prospect filled Anne with jealous misery. Personally, of course, she could do little in opposition, and the extent of her share in the great conspiracy was much exaggerated by scandalous tongues and pens. But Madame de Chevreuse threw herself into her mistress's cause with all the more energy because she hated both Richelieu and the King. The Maréchal d'Ornano's discontent found a hearty ally in her, loveliest and most daring of *intrigantes*, and also in the Princesse de Condé, who had her own reasons for disliking the Montpensier marriage. That younger branch of the Bourbons would thus be exalted above the branch of Bourbon-Condé, now next in succession to the crown. If Monsieur must marry—a troublesome necessity—the Condés wished for a match between him and their daughter Anne-Geneviève, now seven years old. The delay would please the Queen; in the meantime the Prince de Condé was ready to back Maréchal d'Ornano in demanding honours and appanages for Monsieur and even a share in the government. The alternative to the Condé marriage was one with a foreign princess; in either case the young prince would be independent of his brother, his mother and Cardinal de Richelieu. He was as popular, lively and good-natured as the King was unsociable and forbidding; and under the circumstances such a "cabale," as Richelieu calls it, was likely to spread far.

The Cardinal saw his danger. The greater among the conspirators were rather scornful of caution and secrecy.

If Richelieu's knowledge of their objects was at first vague, hardly a rebel name escaped him. From the Prince de Condé, still holding aloof from the Court, and the young Comte de Soissons, who intended himself to marry Mademoiselle de Montpensier, to César, Duc de Vendôme, governor of Brittany, who was prepared to make his province the head-quarters of an insurrection, and his brother Alexandre, the Grand Prior, with many others of less high descent but yet among *les grands*—Richelieu knew them all. Behind them loomed shadows of foreign Powers : the Dutch, indignant at the coldness of their ally and at her treaty with Spain ; the English, "from faithlessness alone"; the Spaniards, from natural enmity and interested ambition ; the Duke of Savoy, to avenge his wounded pride ; and then, of course, the Huguenot party in France—past experience teaching them, Richelieu says bitterly, that they always profited by the troubles of the State.

The ends of the conspiracy revealed themselves with a certain slowness, reaching the Cardinal through one spy and another. All through the spring of 1626 the air was full of dark and threatening rumours. Opposition to the Montpensier marriage was a mere starting-point. Monsieur was little but the figure-head of a faction opposed to the whole of Richelieu's policy and bent on forcing his fall. The refusal of Monsieur's demands was to be the signal for open revolt, in which the Huguenots would make common cause with the princes and half the great nobles of the kingdom. The boldest conspirators talked of killing the Cardinal, "the dragon who watched unceasingly over his master's safety"; of throwing the King into prison, and in case of his death of marrying Monsieur to the Queen. It seems certain that Anne herself was unjustly accused of being even aware of such desperate schemes as these; but she was never quite cleared from the injurious suspicion.

Early in May, when the Court was at Fontainebleau, Richelieu decided to strike; he had evidence enough to convince the King that his brother's attitude was dangerous. M. d'Ornano came to wait on His Majesty. Louis

received him graciously. The same night he was arrested, and the next night found him a prisoner at the castle of Vincennes. His brothers and intimate friends were thrown into the Bastille. "My husband is dead," said Madame d'Ornano when she heard of his capture; and the words were spoken but a few months too soon.

Monsieur was furiously angry. He remonstrated loudly with the King, who merely answered that he had acted on the advice of his Council. The Prince then attacked M. d'Aligre, the Chancellor, a timid personage, who humbly excused himself, declaring that he had given no advice of the kind. Gaston went blustering to Richelieu, from whom he met with a different reception and a different reply. The Cardinal not only acknowledged that the King had asked his advice; he added that he had given it strongly in favour of the arrest of M. d'Ornano, which he considered absolutely necessary for the good of the State and of Monsieur himself. Gaston replied with insulting language and flung away.

"The Cardinal hated Monsieur," says a writer of the time, and we can well believe it—with the scornful hatred of a proud and brilliant man bearing the whole burden of the State on his shoulders, and finding himself constantly thwarted and threatened by an insolent, privileged boy. He hated him more because of the reconciliations he had to arrange, the flatteries he had to use, the fatherly yet respectful manner in which the King's brother must be treated by the King's First Minister—conscious, for the next dozen years, that his sickly master might die childless and be succeeded by this young fellow whose will and power for mischief were only balanced by his weakness of character. Until the birth of a Dauphin, in 1638, destroyed Gaston's political importance, he was to be the chief obstacle in Richelieu's career, the chief thorn in his side.

The arrest of the Maréchal d'Ornano had all the effect that Richelieu intended; but if it warned and terrified the more prudent conspirators, it infuriated the bolder, younger spirits of Monsieur's faction. Madame de Chevreuse and

a few young men, led by the Grand Prieur de Vendôme and Henry de Talleyrand-Périgord, Comte de Chalais, decided that Richelieu must die. They planned that Monsieur should invite himself and a party of his friends to dine with the Cardinal at Fleury, his country-house near Fontainebleau. This gracious act might be supposed to mean that the Prince forgave his friend's arrest. But the real intention was that the Cardinal's guests should murder him. In the confusion that would follow, Monsieur's party meant to do as they pleased with the King and the government.

Richelieu was saved by the weakness of one of the chief conspirators. The Comte de Chalais, Keeper of the King's Wardrobe, a young man of twenty-eight, was at this time the favoured lover of Madame de Chevreuse. He would have killed a dozen cardinals to please her, and he was ready to stab her enemy with his own hand. For all that, he ruined the enterprise. On the eve of the great day he confided the plan to Commander de Valençay, a loyal courtier, though a friend of his own.

M. de Bassompierre may tell the story, for he was at Fontainebleau at the time.

"The said Commander reproached him for his treachery, that being the King's servant he should dare to undertake this against his First Minister; saying that he must give him warning, and that in case he refused to do this he would do it himself: to which Chalais, being intimidated, consented; and they both went in that same hour to Fleury, in order to warn M. le Cardinal, who thanked them, and begged them to go and inform the King of the same: which they did; and the King, at eleven o'clock in the evening, sent to order thirty of his gendarmes and thirty light horse to go immediately to Fleury. The Queen-mother also dispatched thither the nobles of her household. It happened as Chalais had said: towards three o'clock in the morning Monsieur's officers arrived at Fleury, sent to prepare his dinner. M. le Cardinal left them in the house, came to Fontainebleau, and went straight to the bed-chamber of Monsieur, who was getting up, and was

sufficiently amazed to see him. He reproached Monsieur for not having honoured him with his commands to provide dinner, which he would have done as best he could, and said that he had left the house in possession of his people. After this, having handed Monsieur his shirt, he went away to the King, and afterwards to the Queen-mother" . . . leaving Gaston effectually frightened by his terrible coolness.

So ended the Fleury plot. The friends of M. de Chalais were completely puzzled as to how the information could have reached Richelieu, until, the Court having returned to Paris, he made his confession to Madame de Chevreuse, promising more faithfulness in future.

For a moment a kind of paralysis seems to have seized both parties in the game. Ill in body and troubled in mind, realising that his public life must be one long struggle against deadly foes at home and abroad, Richelieu actually offered his resignation to the King. It was plain, he said, that he alone was the cause of divisions in the State. His enemies were so many that he lived at Court in continual peril of assassination. If it were the King's will that in spite of danger he should continue to serve him, he was ready to do so, but he knew that his departure would be for the peace of the realm. Writing also to the Queen-mother, he begged her to take his part with the King, adding that unless he could be more careful of his health in future his career as a statesman would of necessity be short.

Such fits of depression were nothing new. It is likely enough that Richelieu was in earnest, for the moment at least. But if his object was to measure the confidence and loyalty he might expect from his master through the difficult times he foresaw, the experiment succeeded. In a long and kind letter, Louis refused to let his Minister go.

"Mon Cousin," he wrote, ". . . I have every confidence in you, and never has any one served me as well as you. . . . I desire and beg you not to retire, for my affairs would go ill. . . . I pray you to have no fear of the calumnies

which in my Court no one can escape. . . . Be assured that I will protect you against every one, and that I will never abandon you. The Queen, my mother, promises you as much. . . . Be assured that I shall never change, and that, by whomsoever you may be attacked, you will have me for your second."

As to the Cardinal's health, the King promised to spare him as much as possible, to dispense him from all visits, and to give him frequent rest and relaxation. Following on these favours, he ordered him for his greater security a guard of a hundred men.

After the Fleury affair, Richelieu retired for some days to his house at Limours. Here, at the end of May, he received two important visits. One was from the Prince de Condé, tired of his isolation, alarmed by the fate of d'Ornano, and convinced at length that the man at the head of affairs would be safer as a friend than as an enemy. He was well received, for Richelieu had already given Louis XIII. the counsel which he now acted upon—the wise counsel given long ago by the Duke of Milan to Louis XI.—that the princes leagued against the King should be divided amongst themselves.

Monsieur le Prince slept at Limours, and remained the next day to dinner. He talked—Condé always talked much and plausibly—and the Cardinal, by his own account, listened respectfully and answered frankly. They discussed the affairs of Monsieur. It was Condé's opinion that he should be kindly treated, but kept in his place: as to the Maréchal d'Ornano, his arrest had been "a master-stroke" and should be followed up by his trial. He recommended to the Cardinal more caution in dealing with powerful men, but would not hear of his retirement from the head of affairs. It would be the ruin of the State, he said. He told him that he had long desired his friendship; that France had never before seen so great or so disinterested a Minister, whose glorious deeds could not be denied, even by his enemies. All this and much more flattery ended in an alliance between the Prince and the Cardinal, which actually lasted their lives. Condé

became a loyal subject of the King and a devoted adherent and admirer of Richelieu.

The other visit was from Monsieur himself. The consequences of this interview were not so lasting, though for the moment satisfactory. The royal boy was in a chastened frame of mind. He was ready to make his formal submission to the King, without any condition, even as to the safety of M. d'Ornano, who had thus a foretaste of the destiny of all Monsieur's friends. Richelieu's fatherly admonitions had their full effect. The next day, in Paris—Pentecost, May 31—the Prince vowed on the Gospels eternal love and loyalty to the King and to the Queen his mother. A solemn family compact was drawn up and signed: *Louis, Marie, Gaston.*

The Cardinal's next step was the disgrace of M. d'Aligre, the Chancellor, who had failed to face Monsieur in the matter of d'Ornano's arrest. The seals were transferred to Michel de Marillac. Then the Vendôme princes had their turn.

If the Duc de Vendôme—the "César-Monsieur" flattered and feared by Henry IV.'s Court—had been a man of character to match his position, no one of the great nobles could have equalled him in power and popularity. Even as a vain and vicious coward, few men in the kingdom were more dangerous to Richelieu's plans and Louis XIII.'s government. From his province of Brittany, the Duke had watched the failure of the great conspiracy in which he and his brother were deeply engaged. They feared, and with reason, that their own ruin would follow that of the Maréchal d'Ornano. As the month of May passed, and nothing was done, César proceeded to fortify himself at Nantes, while Alexandre, a bolder man, watched events in Paris and sought, not without success, to discover the real mind of his half-brother the King.

Early in June came the startling news that Louis and the Court were setting out for Brittany. They were already on the road, and the Cardinal, lingering a few days at Limours for his health's sake, was about to follow, when he was unexpectedly visited by Alexandre de

Vendôme, hurrying post-haste to fetch his brother from Nantes to meet the displeased King.

From Richelieu's own account, it was a characteristic interview. He had long distrusted these two young men, whom Henry IV. had indulged and exalted with the short-sighted idea that they would be Louis XIII.'s most loyal subjects. On the contrary, says Richelieu, both contributed to every effort that was made to shake the royal authority, and both—had they been able—would have done the kingdom irreparable harm. With grim satisfaction the Cardinal saw these royal birds now struggling in the net he had spread for them. It was not necessary to spare them as Gaston, legitimate prince and heir-presumptive, had been spared.

Richelieu has been accused of deceiving the Grand Prior with false hopes of favour and clemency, thus encouraging him to place his brother and himself in the King's hands. He might have thought himself justified in doing so, if necessary. On the contrary, if he is to be believed, he tried to guard against any accusation of the kind. He pretended to be aware neither of the anxious terror that had brought the young man to Limours, nor of the "fausse hardiesse" which led him to play this game of bluff for himself and for his brother, acting innocence and a frank readiness to face the King.

"When the Grand Prior told the Cardinal that he was going to fetch his brother, he did not answer him that he was doing either well or ill, because he saw that they could not save themselves, or resist the King's power, if they remained in Brittany, and he thought it better that His Majesty should take the trouble to fetch them thence, or even take them on their road, than give them a pretext to say" (what they did say) "that they had been attracted by fine words, deceived and caught by false hopes."

Finding that the Cardinal would give him no clear lead, Alexandre de Vendôme hastened on his way. A few days later, he and his brother, "making a virtue of necessity," met the King at Blois. The next day, both

were arrested and conveyed to the castle of Amboise, from which they were transferred to Vincennes. The Duc de Vendôme's question—"What about Monsieur? Has he been arrested or no?"—was hardly needed to warn Richelieu, who arrived at Blois that same evening, that the conspiracy was still alive and dangerous.

The Comte de Chalais, unimaginably rash and foolish, was playing a game he could only lose. His escape after the Fleury affair had been narrow enough, and he had then solemnly promised loyalty to the Cardinal, even undertaking to act as his spy, informing him of any evil counsels that might reach Monsieur. But Chalais was not his own master. Madame de Chevreuse drove him into a path where there was no more turning back, and after the arrest of the Vendôme princes he became the active agent and cat's-paw of a new combination of old rebel forces which swiftly dragged Monsieur into its centre, his vows of loyalty hardly spoken and the ink of his signature not yet dry.

While the King continued his slow progress into Brittany to assure himself of the loyalty of the province, he was actually enveloped in a cloud of conspiracy. Every night, according to Bassompierre, the Comte de Chalais visited Monsieur in his room, and for two or three hours talked and plotted treason: an easy adventure for the Master of the King's Wardrobe, who had his lodging close to royalty. The plan was that Monsieur should leave the Court and fly either south-west or north-east; either to the Huguenots at La Rochelle, prepared to receive him by the influence of Madame de Chevreuse and Madame de Rohan, or to the Duc d'Épernon and his son at Metz. The Comte de Soissons, whom the King had left behind as governor of Paris, furious at the arrest of his friends the Vendôme princes, was eager not only to help with arms and men towards a civil war, but to seize his own advantage by carrying off Mademoiselle de Montpensier.

This last detail of the plot, it seems, was the first to reach the King's ears, and he defeated it by sending for the heiress and her mother, the Duchesse de Guise,

who immediately followed the Court on its westward journey.

This piece of ill-luck was swiftly followed by others. Monsieur himself was undecided, timid, difficult to move to instant action. Disliking the Huguenot leaders, he was unwilling to place himself in their hands. Metz was his favourite idea; but the Marquis de la Valette would not act independently of his father, and the old Duc d'Épernon, it seems, had had enough of quarrels with the King, for he went so far as to send him the letter that Monsieur had written.

Richelieu seems to have felt a certain scornful pity for the unfortunate Chalais, whose evil report was brought to him by other spies. More than once he had him warned that he was on the road to ruin; yet "the poor gentleman" went on with his desperate schemes. And even the spies had not discovered the extent of these. Chalais was betrayed to his destruction by a friend, the Comte de Louvigny, who quarrelled with him because he would not take his side in some trivial dispute with the Comte de Candale, another son of the Duc d'Épernon. Chalais made it clear that neither he nor his friends could afford to be on ill terms with that family.

This quarrel took place between Saumur and Nantes, as the Court travelled down the Loire in all the fresh beauty of early summer. M. de Bassompierre, who was present, a courtier of long experience, thought nothing of it—a mere matter of an *amourette*—and it is pretty certain that public opinion was with him in denouncing Louvigny as "ce méchant garçon" for the revenge he took. Having been known as "parfait ami de Chalais," the confidant of his secrets, he straightway poured them all into the ears of the Cardinal and the King. Bassompierre hints that in his rage and spite he told even more than the truth; but that alone was enough to condemn Chalais.

He was arrested at Nantes on July 8. On the 11th, the Estates of Brittany were opened by the King amid loyal rejoicings, a new governor, the Maréchal de Thémines, taking the place of the Duc de Vendôme. By this appointment

Richelieu showed a certain magnanimity; forgetting his own brother's death at the hands of the Maréchal's son, he remembered and rewarded the old soldier's faithfulness in 1616, when by the arrest of Condé he had checked the rebel party and lightened the task of the Richelieu-Barbin ministry.

While Chalais lay in prison through those summer days, his fate, if ever doubtful, was decided by the poltroonery of the prince for whom he had conspired. To assure his own safety and to gain some of his ends, if not all, Monsieur made a full confession to the Cardinal first, then to the King in Council. In his long and confused declarations, preserved in the French Archives, a few points stand out clearly: that he described all his plans against the State, especially against the Cardinal; treason, revolt, murder, and civil war: that he denounced all his friends, not only d'Ornano and Chalais, but his Vendôme half-brothers, the Comte de Soissons and many more. He did not quite spare Madame de Chevreuse or even the Queen. On the other hand, he once again promised obedience to the King and consented to marry Mademoiselle de Montpensier; but the reward he asked for his submission was not, as it might well have been, the pardon of his friends, but the great appanage that he had long demanded. Richelieu found it politic to satisfy him so far, and Gaston became Duke of Orléans and of Chartres and Count of Blois; but his actual income, in the form of pensions, still depended largely on the pleasure of the King.

"After which," says Richelieu, "the marriage was made without further difficulty on Monsieur's side. The Cardinal married them on August 5, in the Chapel of the Fathers of the Oratory at Nantes, in whose house the Queen-mother was lodged."

In the last days, when the formalities of the trial of Chalais were already begun, Monsieur made some weak attempt to save him; but the victim was marked for death. His own prayers, entreaties, and despairing confessions, his mother's agonised letter to the King, the efforts of some of his friends—more courageous than Madame de

Chevreuse, who dared not even answer his last adoring letters—were all of no avail. He was condemned to the frightful death of a traitor.

The King commuted its worst horrors. Chalais was beheaded at Nantes on August 19. At the end he bore his fate like a soldier; and if his agony was unusually long and terrible, the cause lay in the mistaken kindness of his friends, who had managed to kidnap the public executioner. His place was taken by a condemned wretch from the prison who thus earned his own pardon. They say that at the twentieth blow from that unskilful arm young Chalais still groaned—"Jésus Maria!" and a shudder of pity ran through the staring crowd.

CHAPTER IV

1627—1628

Two famous edicts—The tragedy of Bouteville and Des Chapelles—The death of Madame and its consequences—War with England—The Siege of La Rochelle.

RICHELIEU had triumphed. Monsieur was safely married; for the moment contented and *rangé*. The restless, foolish, unhappy Chalais was dead; the Maréchal d'Ornano had died in prison, not without a suspicion of poison which seems unjustified; the Vendôme brothers were securely bolted into the damp dungeons of Vincennes; the Comte de Soissons had fled to Savoy; Madame de Chevreuse, banished from the Court, had taken refuge with Duke Charles of Lorraine; Queen Anne was in disgrace. Conspiracy was scotched, if not killed; the storm had blown over, and the highest in France, it seemed, lay at the Cardinal's mercy.

By two popular edicts he pursued his plan of crushing the nobles and making the King supreme. One destroyed, first in Brittany, then all over France, every feudal stronghold that was not needed for the defence of province or kingdom. Such a measure was something of a revolution, for it struck sharply at the local strength and independent authority of the nobles, great and small. Peasants and townspeople were delighted to help the royal officials in smashing gates and tearing down tall watch-towers and walls six feet thick, which had threatened their liberty for so many centuries. As is usual in revolutions, a good deal of injustice was done; many proprietors suffered for

the sins of a few; promised indemnities were not paid. And after all, Richelieu or no Richelieu, civilisation was in fact advancing. Manners were changing. Every year widened the difference between the centuries, left Henry IV. farther behind and brought Louis XIV. nearer. Richelieu, in his dealing with the great men, their fortresses and their governments, only hurried the inevitable march. But he also gained his own immediate ends.

The other famous edict forbade duels. They had long been forbidden, under the severest penalties; but the passions of men and the usages of society had been too strong for the law, which had become almost a dead letter. The nobles of France fought each other "by day and night, by moonlight, by torchlight, in the public streets and squares," and on the slightest quarrel. The Church protested, the law threatened, without avail. Richelieu once more brought forward the royal authority, forbidding duels on pain of death, with the firm intention of making an example of any man who should dare to disobey.

The occasion was not long in coming. François de Montmorency, Comte de Bouteville, was one of the best-known duellists in France—or in Europe, for that matter. At twenty-seven he had already fought twenty-two duels. Fighting was his passion. "If you want to fight," said the Président de Chevry to a punctilious gentleman, "go and pull a hair out of Bouteville's beard; *il vous fera passer votre envie.*"

In the spring of 1627 Bouteville was in Flanders, having made France too hot to hold him. The Archduchess Isabel, from her Court at Brussels, wrote to ask his pardon of Louis XIII., who refused it, adding, however, that he might return to France safe from justice, on condition that he appeared neither in Paris nor at Court. This answer touched Bouteville's pride. He had a quarrel with the Baron de Beuvron; he resolved to fight it out in Paris in the teeth of King, Cardinal, and edicts new and old. Each man had two seconds: it was a triple duel with swords, three against three; and it was fought in broad daylight in the Place Royale, the most fashionable

square in Paris. The windows of the high red houses were crowded with spectators.

Both principals escaped unhurt; but the Comte des Chapelles, Bouteville's second, killed his adversary, M. de Bussy d'Amboise, governor of Vitry. Honour being satisfied, the survivors fled for their lives. M. de Beuvron and two other men got away safely to England. M. de Bouteville and M. des Chapelles, on their way to Lorraine, were foolhardy enough to sleep at Vitry, where the fatal news had outrun them, and "the dead man's mother," says Bassompierre, "arrested them."

They were brought back to Paris, imprisoned in the Bastille, and after a short trial sentenced to death. Then the whole opinion of society rose passionately in their favour. Such edicts were useless; human nature could not obey them. Men must quarrel, and there was one honourable, approved way of settling their quarrels: they must fight. If they did not they were scorned as cowards; the King himself sneered at their prudence, their obedience to his own edicts. Thus cried every gentleman in France, and the Cardinal's heart must have echoed the cry. Though he would not save the victims, saying that it was a question which throat should be cut—that of the duel or that of the law; though he listened unmoved to the prayers of their friends and relations—the Princesse de Condé and the Duc de Montmorency were Bouteville's cousins, for the best blood of France ran in his veins—yet the words with which, in his *Memoirs*, he mourns the two young men, have a ring of sincerity. Famous for courage in their lives, it did not fail them, he says, at the approach of a disgraceful death.

"There was nothing feeble in their speech, nothing low in their actions. They received the news of death as if it had been that of pardon. . . . They were well prepared to die. . . . There was one difference between them: Bouteville appeared sad in those last hours, and the Comte des Chapelles joyful; Bouteville sad for the faults he had committed, and the other joyful for the hope he had of Paradise."

The two were beheaded in the Place de Grève on June 21, 1627. Their deaths, following on his signal triumphs of the preceding year, made the name of Richelieu hateful and terrible to the nobles of France. They began to feel that he might be as almighty in power as he was relentless in action. But they did not cease to fight duels.

Another tragic event in the early summer of that year was the death of Monsieur's young wife, a few days after the birth of her child—not the prince whose arrival had been anxiously expected all the winter, the suspense adding pride and importance to Monsieur and Madame, gloom and jealousy to the King and Queen—but a princess, afterwards known as the Grande Mademoiselle, the greatest heiress in Europe, whose distinguished, eccentric presence was to be familiar to the French Court for more than sixty years.

"That death," says Bassompierre, "changed the face of the Court, gave rise to new designs, and in short was the cause of many evils which have since come to pass."

The Duchess had no more sincere mourner than Cardinal de Richelieu. "Deplorable . . . prejudicial to the welfare of the State," he writes of the death of Madame, ". . . who in ten months was wife of a great prince, sister-in-law of the three first and greatest kings of Christendom, a mother, and a corpse."

The Cardinal had good reasons for his regret. Monsieur, who since his marriage had lived peaceably, content with his own trifling amusements, influenced by his wife's gentle attraction rather than by a set of ambitious favourites, now became once more a centre of varied intrigue. And it was not only his ready disloyalty, but the constant scandal of his private life, which induced Louis XIII. and Richelieu to do their best to satisfy his restless spirit. The foolish and vicious boy, a widower at nineteen, was after all the only hope of the direct royal line.

By way of consoling the Prince and occupying his mind, "the King," says a memoir-writer of that century, "proposed to him all kinds of honest exercise, principally that of the chase: there being hardly a day on which His Majesty

did not so divert himself, he imagined that Monsieur would take the same pleasure in it"—which he did not, being a Parisian and a gambler. "And since Monsieur possessed no house near Paris where he could sometimes take the air, His Majesty thought well to give him that of Limours, belonging to the Cardinal de Richelieu; thus gratifying His Highness in the belief that he would take pleasure in beautifying it. It was purchased at the same price for which it had been acquired, which amounted to 400,000 *livres*, including the domain of Montlhéry; and with a further payment of 300,000 *livres* to the Cardinal de Richelieu, as well for the furniture as for his expenditure and the improvements he had made."

The writer goes on to explain that the Cardinal gladly seized this opportunity of getting rid of Limours.

"The Cardinal was disgusted with that house, finding it unpleasant and unhealthy; both because of its low situation, yet without fountains or other waters, and because of many other things that were lacking; and he was happy to seize a good chance of getting rid of it, and greatly to his advantage; which he could not have expected in any other quarter. For the Queen-mother's persuasion decided the King to gratify the Cardinal her creature, in whom she had then every confidence."

The last sentence hardly bears the stamp of truth. In the year 1627 and later, Richelieu could not be described as the creature of Marie de Médicis, and her confidence in him had almost ceased to exist.

In the spring of that year the discontent between France and England flashed out into war. This had been imminent since the early autumn of 1626, when Charles I. roughly drove out his wife's French household; and Bassompierre's embassy of remonstrance had only smoothed matters over for the time. Richelieu did not desire war with England; it meant a new struggle with the Huguenots. He intended to fix his own date for that, and to make it final. He was not yet ready. But this time Buckingham's jealous anger and restless ambition were strong enough to force his hand. Louis XIII. had refused to receive the Duke again at the

French Court. This, according to contemporaries, be they right or wrong, was the chief and secret cause of the war. Outwardly, it was brought about by quarrels and piracies on both sides at sea, as well as by Charles I.'s sympathy with the oppressed Huguenots; but every enemy of Richelieu's government, Protestant or Catholic, was more or less drawn into a coalition against him. Not only the Duc de Soubise and his friends in England, and the Duc de Rohan in Languedoc, but Duke Charles of Lorraine, influenced by Madame de Chevreuse, the Duke of Savoy and his guest the Comte de Soissons, and the Archduchess Isabel, ruler of the Low Countries, who did her best to draw Spain to England's side, were concerned in this great enterprise of crushing Cardinal de Richelieu. As a fact, at this very time, Spain and France were allied by treaty against England; but Richelieu differed from the Queen-mother and the rest of the Catholic party in profoundly distrusting Olivarez; and he knew, quite as well as his many enemies did, that an English victory would leave France, divided in herself, standing alone against Europe.

From mid-winter onward, the English fleet was preparing; through what enormous difficulties, readers of English history know. From week to week, all through the spring, more and more alarming reports crossed the Channel: the English were coming; any day might see their sails in the north-west, bearing down on the coast of France. La Rochelle was their destination; but they could not reach the Huguenot city without first seizing one or both of the islands, Ré and Oléron, which guard it from the sea. Of these, Ré was now the strongest, new royal forts having been built there since the last Huguenot revolt, to overawe the town. Convinced that the English "could do nothing there," Richelieu threw himself with fiery energy into the task of strengthening Oléron and the forts on the mainland. His letters, written during those months to the governors of towns and castles on the coast, especially to M. de Guron, governor of Marans, M. de Launay-Razilly, commanding in Oléron, M. de Toiras and others, including his brother-in-law the Marquis de Brézé, and his friend

and lieutenant M. de Sourdis, Bishop of Maillezais, afterwards Archbishop of Bordeaux—kinsman and successor of his enemy Cardinal *Sordido*—are a really wonderful study. Few great statesmen have shown such a genius for detail. As the danger approached his letters flew to all parts of the coast, and in reading them one may almost hear the heavy strokes of the axe in Breton forests, the hammering of ship-builders, the creaking of cordage, the clank of arms and the rolling of cannon-balls, the rumbling of waggons laden with tools, powder, provisions for the islands. M. de Guron, through those months of March, April and May, can have slept but little. He had to understand "at half a word." He had to cope with the angry tempers of the men who worked under him; he had to consider the poor people of the islands and to take care that the soldiers did not oppress them. Over and over again Richelieu writes in the interest of the peasants; they must not be taxed or tormented. In fact, they were neighbours of his old Luçon days; a very few miles to the north, the spire of his cathedral rose over the marshes; almost every letter shows his familiarity with every inch of that coast.

Another characteristic point is the gentle tone in which Richelieu writes of the Huguenots, grimly watching from the walls of La Rochelle the strengthening of the islands, the gathering of armies, the hurrying to their coast of a crowd of young Catholic nobles, the desperate energy of equipment with which ships and boats were being collected from north and south to meet the coming storm. The people of La Rochelle were anxious, and with reason. Their minds were divided, not altogether rejoicing in the English descent, as they proved a little later—for when the Duc de Soubise, coming from England, presented himself at the gates, they were shut against him until his mother, old Madame de Rohan of the dreams and visions, went down herself to the harbour, commanded that the gates should be opened, took his hand and led him in. The citizens of La Rochelle might resist the rulers of their own country, but they were not unanimously ready to welcome a foreign invader, and it was Richelieu's policy to

encourage this doubtfulness. Writing to M. de Navailles, commander of the cavalry in the island of Ré, he more than once enjoins him to assure Messieurs de la Rochelle, who might be disquieted by the warlike preparations going on at their very gates, of the excellent intentions of His Majesty. They need fear nothing, as long as they paid him the respect and obedience they owed. These military works were not for their harm, but for his own security. Again, writing to his uncle the Commander de la Porte, governor of Angers, Richelieu says: "Let the Huguenots spread what reports they will: provided they continue in obedience, they will always be well treated. We intend no harm to them, but only to prevent their doing any."

The alarms and the frenzied preparations went on through the spring and far into the summer, and were at their height while the Bouteville affair and the death of Madame occupied the mind of Paris. On the day of the royal obsequies at Saint-Denis, the English fleet had already sailed from "Porsemus," as Richelieu spells it, and ten or twelve days later it appeared off La Rochelle. Louis XIII. had already left Paris for the west coast. Monsieur was appointed lieutenant-general of the royal armies in Poitou, which were actually commanded by the King's old cousin, the Duc d'Angoulême, with Louis de Marillac, brother of the Chancellor, as second in command, and by the Marshals de Schomberg and de Bassompierre. Later in the year, the Prince de Condé and the Duc de Montmorency were charged with checking the Duc de Rohan in Languedoc. By that time, Toiras being blockaded by the English in the Isle of Ré, and the attitude of La Rochelle being no longer doubtful, Richelieu had ceased to show patience and toleration of the King's rebels. The day he had long foreseen had at last arrived. "Faut ruiner les Huguenots. Si Ré se sauve, facile. S'il se perd, plus difficile, mais faisable et nécessaire comme l'unique remède de la perte de Ré. Autrement les Anglois et Rochelois seroyent unis et puissans."

These notes form part of a report drawn up by the Cardinal's secretaries of an interview between himself and

Condé, which took place at Richelieu in the early autumn. The words may probably have been Condé's: that foolish firebrand was in favour of setting the whole kingdom in a blaze of religious war, of persecuting the Protestants and pulling down their houses, in hopes that they might make such reprisals as would infuriate the country against them and lead to something like their extermination. These mad ideas were far enough from Richelieu; but he, equally with Condé, was now resolved to crush the rebel power, and to bring all Frenchmen under the King's authority.

But a long and difficult struggle lay before him.

The King was ill when he left Paris, and after one day's journey fever seized him so violently that he could go no farther. For weeks he lay between life and death at Villeroy, on the road to Orléans. He was there in the middle of July, when a courier arrived from the Marquis de Brézé, bringing news that the English had landed in Ré, and after sharp fighting, many precious lives being lost on both sides, had forced M. de Toiras to retire into the fort of Saint-Martin, where he was closely besieged. No one disputed the desperate courage of Toiras; but he earned great blame from the Cardinal for his rashness and want of foresight; the citadel being hardly in a state of defence, and provisioned for seven or eight weeks only. Boasting that he could drive off the English with one arm, he had indeed never faced the possibility of being shut up in Saint-Martin. The despised enemy was to teach him a sharp lesson.

The situation was serious to the last degree, and Richelieu had to meet it alone. The King was far too ill to hear such news, and his life was more valuable to France than any forts and islands: the Cardinal had to accept a responsibility never yet openly his. Walking gingerly in a crowd of enemies, he had till now sheltered himself under the authority of the King. Now he rose supreme, to give those "prompt and powerful orders" which, as he says, were the only way to face the storm. "A thousand cares tormented and agitated his mind; but

the greatest of all, which troubled him most, was to show no anxiety before the King. . . . All the day he was with him; at night he seldom left him; and yet his mind was always busy with the orders which secretly, from hour to hour, he had to send out for the succour of the island and the hindering of the English. . . . For he heard that there was scarcity in the forts of Ré, and that, if not promptly relieved, they were lost."

From the gates of Villeroy rode couriers, agents, envoys, carrying orders and money to all parts. The State funds were so low that Richelieu was compelled to use his own money and credit: he ventured all without hesitation. He sent a large sum to Le Havre, for the equipment of five ships; to Saint-Malo, for eight ships and eleven great guns; to Brouage and Les Sables d'Olonne, that any quantity of provisions of all kinds, wine, meat, flour, biscuit, might be ready to be thrown into the besieged citadel. For that purpose he ordered a number of pinnaces from Bayonne and the river-mouths on the Bay of Biscay, which could approach the islands, sailing or rowing, when the weather made large ships useless. Three bold sea-captains, Beaulieu, Courcelles, and Canteleu, promised to carry victuals into Ré or to die in the attempt. Richelieu invited help from Spain, in accordance with treaties; but that cautious government waited to send ships till Buckingham had sailed away for England and something like a French navy, created by Richelieu's marvellous practical energy and commanded by the Duc de Guise, was cruising in the waters of La Rochelle.

This did not happen till December. No relief of Saint-Martin became possible till the first days of October, when on a stormy night a number of small boats slipped through the English fleet and brought in a supply of provisions and a reinforcement of four hundred men to M. de Toiras and his starving, exhausted garrison. By this time the King had recovered, and he and the Cardinal had joined the army before La Rochelle.

With their arrival the luck turned, and the English attack began to fail, though the people of La Rochelle

were now ready to give Buckingham everything he wanted, except—for after all, they were French—a permanent foothold in their islands. The commanders on the coast, under Richelieu's immediate orders, worked with double activity. Schomberg landed in Ré, Saint-Martin was relieved, and after some hard fighting the English were driven back with serious loss to their ships. A few days later Buckingham sailed away to England, leaving behind him the best part of his army, colours, horses, guns, and baggage. He never saw France again. The English flags taken in Ré were carried in triumph through Paris and hung up in Notre Dame.

And now the fight, one of the sternest in history, the details of which would fill a volume, was between Cardinal de Richelieu and the proud old city of La Rochelle, the stronghold which for two hundred years, either in politics or religion, had repeatedly and successfully braved the kings of France. "The Cardinal had to expect," says M. Martin, "a terrible resistance. The population of La Rochelle, swelled by the zealous Huguenots of the surrounding country, numbered at least thirty thousand souls—a race of fierce and intrepid corsairs, hardened to fatigue and danger, accustomed, for sixty years past, to live with restless vigilance in the perpetual state of siege which they had imposed on themselves in order to preserve their stormy liberties."

These liberties Richelieu was resolved that they should no longer enjoy. And except for the support of the King and of his few trusted lieutenants, he was almost alone in that resolution. The nobles of France, even the commanders of the army, saw very well that the entire conquest of the Huguenots was a long step towards their own impotence under an absolute King and a strong Minister. Even the gay soldier Bassompierre said half seriously, "We shall be fools enough to take La Rochelle!" Such opinions, of which he was well aware, did not give the Cardinal a moment's pause. He made some attempt to disarm his enemies by civilities to the Queen-mother, by obtaining a Cardinal's Hat for her saintly and dis-

tinguished friend Père de Bérulle—his own friend in his Luçon days; but he was too clever to expect much result, and he probably cared little at this moment, when all his instincts of a soldier, a born general, were flaming up within him at the sight of camps to be ruled, armies to be moved, great towering walls to be laid low. Ruin might follow, if it must: the Huguenots should have their lesson.

He had summoned Père Joseph, his chief counsellor, to join him before La Rochelle. The Capuchin walked from Paris in leisurely fashion, visiting convents in Poitou and preaching by the way. He reached the camp on one of those days in October when the Cardinal, lately arrived, was absent on the coast directing the despatch of fresh troops and stores to the islands. He was lodged in the Cardinal's quarters, a small moated house called Pont-la-Pierre, on the sand-hills, only a hundred paces from the flat sea-shore at Angoulins, just south of La Rochelle. That very night there was an alarm that five hundred men were coming in boats from the town, to blow up the house and kill or capture the Cardinal. Though two regiments, according to Bassompierre, were quartered at Angoulins, the house was outside immediate help, and on a dark and windy night might well be surprised. Père Joseph had scarcely arrived when he was invaded by M. de Marillac and two hundred musketeers. A whole army indeed was on foot to receive the adventurers. Regiments were lying flat among the dunes; the King himself was on horseback all night in heavy rain, watching behind Pont-la-Pierre with a troop of cavalry. All these precautions seemed absurd to Bassompierre and his brother officers, who did not love the Cardinal or appreciate the King's anxious care for his safety. After all, the expected attack did not come off. Either the men of La Rochelle were warned, or, as Père Joseph thought, the weather was too much for them. He himself was praised by the King for his intrepidity; for when he might have retired to the royal quarters he preferred to remain at Pont-la-Pierre in charge of the Cardinal's papers.

The character of Louis XIII. never shows so well as in time of war. The gloomy, nervous, irresolute young man was a daring soldier. In spite of his weak health he shunned no hardship; the outdoor endurance learnt in the hunting-field proved itself of real value in battle and siege. Early in December of that year, when the regular blockade of La Rochelle had begun, Cardinal de Richelieu wrote to the Queen-mother with a report of the King's health:

". . . Although the country is most evil, tempest, wind and rain being the usual course, and the soil constantly a quagmire, His Majesty does not cease to dwell here with as much gaiety as if he were in the most beautiful place in the world. . . . He is constantly at work . . . he has regulated his army, reformed his regiments . . . he reviews his army, visits his works. . . . The day before yesterday he spent three hours on the dyke that he is making, to bar the harbour. Not only did he overlook the work, but set an example by working with his own hands. His Majesty alone does much more to advance his affairs than all those who have the honour to be employed under his command. The men of La Rochelle make little sorties, but are always beaten back."

The Cardinal was wise enough to give the King the credit of all his own marvellous doings at this time. It was practicable to blockade La Rochelle by land; but as long as the harbour and channel were open, it was impossible to hinder the city from receiving supplies by sea. At the same time, the difficulties connected with the land siege were considerable enough; and the army regulations carried out by Richelieu, mentioned in his letter to Marie de Médicis, were as stern as they were necessary. Three leagues of circumvallation, strengthened by forts and redoubts, had to be held by a host of more or less undisciplined men, whose careless commanders thought more of their own interests and their own quarrels than of the service of the King. Before Louis and the Cardinal arrived on the scene, the Duc d'Angoulême had been negligent or humane enough to

allow the Rochellois to come out into their fields and gather in their harvest; and after the siege had really begun, he allowed a hundred and twenty oxen to be smuggled one night into the city. It might have cost a lesser man his head.

Richelieu once in full authority, no more such weakness was shown; but if implacably stern towards the besieged, he showed himself just and benevolent towards both the King's soldiers and the poor peasants of that unhappy land, who had dragged on miserable lives through generations of religious wars. The soldiers were forbidden to rob the peasants, or to interfere with their field work. The army was regularly paid and provided with food and clothing, while the officers found themselves reinforced and overshadowed by a crowd of warlike ecclesiastics, the Bishops of Maillezais, of Mende, of Nîmes, and others, not to mention Père Joseph and his train of friars, who fought and fortified, preached and prayed, besieging the heretics in the spirit of crusaders and waging a holy war for Richelieu's political ends.

The Duc d'Angoulême, with his fellow generals Schomberg and Bassompierre—Monsieur having quickly withdrawn from the uncomfortable siege to find amusement and mischief in Paris—commanding an army from which blasphemy and crime were banished, were charged with the land blockade and with such outside work as pulling down the castles of rebel Huguenot nobles in the neighbouring country—among them that of the Duc de Soubise. Warned by such severities, and impressed by the failure of the English to succour La Rochelle, several of the Huguenot gentlemen of Poitou came into the camp to assure the King of their loyalty. The most distinguished among them, the Duc de la Trémoïlle, listened to the persuasive voice of Père Joseph and became a Catholic, and certain of his friends followed his example—a signal triumph for Richelieu which was not encouraging to the starving heroes of La Rochelle. Towards the same time the young Comte de Soissons returned from Savoy, and instead of supporting the Duc de Rohan, as he had

threatened, in Languedoc, asked the King's pardon and joined the royal army.

In February 1628 the King's cheerful interest in the siege suddenly failed. The monotony of camp life, the slow advance of the necessary works, and the horrible weather, bored him unbearably: "son ennui vint jusqu'à tel point," writes Richelieu, "qu'il estimoit sa vie être en péril s'il ne faisoit un tour à Paris." He may probably have been right, for the damp marshes on which the army lived were hardly healthy for a man subject to low fever; Richelieu himself was prostrated by it several times in that spring. All the same, he was angry and scornful at the King's desertion. He was also uneasy on his own account, for Paris seethed with the intrigues of his deadly enemies, and political clouds were gathering in the south. For a moment it seemed possible that La Rochelle would escape: the departure of both King and Cardinal would have brought the siege to an end. In remaining alone, Richelieu made a bold venture which was justified. The King returned from Paris in April; in the meanwhile, he made the Cardinal his lieutenant-general, with supreme authority over his forces by land and sea.

Richelieu's first care was to finish the great dyke or mole by means of which alone the harbour of La Rochelle could be barred against all entrance from the sea. Two famous workmen from Paris, Métezeau and Tiriot, engineer and master-mason, undertook this tremendous piece of work, at which the regiments laboured in turn. Several times, in the early winter, the great beams and blocks of stone were swept away by furious seas, but Richelieu only began again: the two arms of the mole were well advanced in spring, and the Rochellois could watch from their ramparts the growing of those cruel prison walls against which Atlantic waves tumbled in vain. The narrow passage in the centre was blocked by sunken ships laden with stones, and then the doomed city was in the hands of her enemies: they had only to wait for her surrender.

We may see Cardinal de Richelieu as artists have

fancied him, standing on the wet rugged stones of the great mole, green water washing and foaming almost round his feet. Immense hulls of English ships loom in the offing, and small boats full of armed men are dancing on the waves. The gigantic beams of the *chevaux de frise* protecting the mole are splintered by cannon-balls. A fresh breeze is blowing: the Cardinal's scarlet cloak falls back from his slight steel-clad shoulders; he wears a sword; he is bare-headed, except for a skull-cap. He stands in his high boots, with folded arms, looking out to sea, unmoved, confident in his defences; while a group of soldiers and ecclesiastics, some yards behind him, talk and stare excitedly.

The Cardinal's mole and his other fortifications were too much for the English fleet when it returned in May: it hardly even attempted an attack, but sailed away in a week, leaving La Rochelle a prey to famine, though not yet to despair.

The story of that terrible summer has often been told: how fresh English promises, with the desperate heroism of Guiton, the famous mayor, encouraged the town to hold out to the last; how the weak died by thousands, and the strong lived on grass, shell-fish, stewed hides and leather and worse food still; how old men, women and children, driven out of the city as useless mouths, were not allowed, even at the request of Madame de Rohan, to pass through the royal lines, but were forced to turn back, so that many, the gates being shut upon them, died miserably between the walls and the camp.

It was the end of September, three weeks after the murder of Buckingham, when an English fleet and army arrived at last, too late: a French fleet awaited them, French batteries were in full force. The harbour was not to be entered, even by means of fire-ships, and after two days' hard fighting the winds of heaven declared themselves against the luckless city; a gale forced the English to run for shelter, and the prayers of La Rochelle could not induce them to renew the battle. A week later the city surrendered to the King: quite half her population were dead; less than two hundred remained of her heroic fighting men.

On October 30 Cardinal de Richelieu entered the city on horseback. It was a fearful sight. "On trouva la ville pleine de morts, dans les chambres, dans les maisons, et dans les rues et places publiques;" for the wretched survivors had lacked strength to bury their dead. On the morning of All Saints' Day the victorious commander said mass in the reconsecrated Church of Sainte-Marguerite, assisted by his lieutenant, M. de Sourdis, now Archbishop of Bordeaux. He then carried the keys of the city to meet the King, who made his state entry on the same day, the Cardinal riding alone before His Majesty, preceded by the three commanders of the army. An enormous convoy of provisions was a more welcome sight to the wolfish creatures crowding in their streets full of tragedy and falling on skeleton knees at Louis XIII.'s feet.

The city, once submissive, was treated severely, but not barbarously. Richelieu would crush rebels with his whole strength, but he left men free to practise their own religion, provided it did not interfere with their obedience to the State. In this he was consistent: a wiser man than Louis XIV., he would never have revoked the great Henry's edict and deprived France of a multitude of her most capable citizens. The walls and towers of La Rochelle were razed to the ground; the city lost her proud self-governing independence, and became subject to the royal authority. But an amnesty was offered to the leading Huguenots, and the Cardinal placed the gallant Guiton, corsair by nature, in command of one of His Majesty's ships.

CHAPTER V

1628–1630

The Duc de Nevers and the war of the Mantuan Succession—The rebellion in Languedoc—A new Italian campaign—Richelieu as Commander-in-Chief.

A FEW days after the submission of La Rochelle a great storm destroyed the mole which had been the city's destruction. Winds and floods devastated the west of France, and the Cardinal and the Chancellor were nearly drowned in crossing the Loire on their journey with the Court back to Paris.

There was no time for delay. France was on the eve of a new war; and, though the Huguenot question was not really settled as long as the Duc de Rohan kept rebellion stirring in Languedoc, Richelieu felt himself safe in laying it aside for the moment. Spain and Savoy had attacked the Duke of Mantua; his fortress of Casale in Montferrat had been blockaded by Spanish troops for some months before the fall of La Rochelle, but had held out gallantly in the hope of relief from France; indeed, a body of French volunteers had already forced their way in, led by the Cardinal's trusted agent, M. de Guron, whom he had sent from La Rochelle to manage matters with Savoy until the French were free to act openly.

The difficulty now was that French opinion found itself deeply divided on the question of Mantua. The new Duke was Charles de Gonzague, Duc de Nevers, who had succeeded Vincenzo di Gonzaga as a lineal descendant of the old family. His succession to Mantua and Montferrat

was disputed in various quarters and for various reasons. The Duke of Savoy claimed Montferrat, the Duke of Guastalla claimed Mantua; Spain would not have a French prince ruling in Italy, and the Emperor Ferdinand II. insisted on his right as suzerain to hold the provinces and to decide the matter.

The Duc de Nevers was one of the greatest nobles in France. And not only that: he was the head of the house of Paleologus, and the natural heir, had it still existed, to the throne of Constantinople. He was a high-minded, magnificent personage, brave, chivalrous, romantic—Père Joseph's intimate friend and fellow-crusader. Under the regency he had been a disturbing element, and Marie de Médicis hated him for reasons of her own. In those days her rage against him had led her to speak scornfully of his birth and his race.

"Which coming to the Duke's knowledge," says M. de Montglat, "he said that he knew well the respect he owed her as the mother of his King; but that, on the other hand, every one was aware that the Gonzagas were princes before the Medici were gentlemen. These words so piqued the Queen that she never forgave him."

Therefore there was a private motive of revenge behind the strong opposition offered by the Queen-mother and her friends—the Chancellor Marillac, on this occasion, joining his voice once more with those of the Cardinal de Bérulle, the Princesse de Conti and her lover Bassompierre, and all those of the Court who hated and envied Richelieu—to the plan of marching at once, with the victorious army of La Rochelle, to the succour of the Duke of Mantua. They argued that the troops needed rest after their eighteen months of hardship; that the Huguenot party was not yet really crushed and would have time to rise again; that the Duke of Mantua's difficulties mattered little in comparison with a peaceful settlement at home. To these zealous Catholics it appeared horribly inconsistent that the Pope should send congratulations and command *Te Deums*, and that a Cardinal's Hat should be bestowed on Alphonse de Richelieu, now Archbishop of Lyons—a striking departure

from the precedent which forbade that honour to two brothers—all this to glorify the conquest of La Rochelle; while the hero of that conquest was ready and eager to plunge into war with the Catholic powers, Austria and Spain.

This was the keenest trial of strength that had yet taken place between the Queen-mother and her former *protégé*. To all her arguments she added those of family affections and old alliance: the Queen of Spain and the future Duchess of Savoy were the King's sisters; peace with Spain and the Empire had been the chief object of her own policy as Regent. In reply, Richelieu maintained his views: the honour of France was concerned in the Mantuan affair; the Duke's legitimate right could not be disputed; and if France were to suffer the pretensions of Spain, Savoy, and the Empire, she would be acting a part both cowardly and foolish. Never would Louis XIII.'s Minister consent thus to degrade his King. The Cardinal went on to make a statement of his policy and his intentions, promising that by the month of May Casale would be relieved and the royal army free to deal with the Huguenots in Languedoc. "So that your Majesty will, I hope, return victorious to Paris in the month of August." In a more personal strain he reproached the King for want of confidence, and frankly pointed out, in Marie's presence, the faults of character which made him a difficult master to serve. Then once more he alluded to his own weak health, and offered to lay down the burden of office, too heavy, he said, for him to bear.

Marie de Médicis listened, and perhaps, with her eyes fixed on her gloomy and worried son, hoped for an instant that the Cardinal's career was ended. Nothing of the kind. "When the King had heard all this with as much patience as the humours of the great generally bestow on the most important affairs, he told the Cardinal that he was resolved to profit by what had been said, but would hear no more of his retirement."

From this conference, says M. Martin, "Richelieu *sortit roi*." Our point of view shows this as a fact; but neither

the Cardinal himself nor his enemies saw it at the time. The Queen-mother's hostility was only now becoming open and active; the "Day of Dupes," when Richelieu ran his greatest risk and reached his zenith of power, was still almost two years distant.

The King left Paris for the south on January 15, 1629, travelling through eastern France, while the army of La Rochelle, under Marshals Schomberg, Bassompierre, and de Créquy, having "refreshed itself" among the mountains of Auvergne, marched to join His Majesty in Dauphiné. Cardinal de Richelieu travelled with the King from Châlons. On his way from Paris he stopped at Les Caves, near Nogent-sur-Seine, a country house belonging to his old friend Claude Bouthillier, then a Secretary of State, afterwards Surintendant des Finances, the father of young Léon Bouthillier, Comte de Chavigny, who became Richelieu's right hand and was loved by him as a son. At Les Caves the Cardinal met the Prince de Condé, and conferred with him as to the crushing of the Huguenots in Languedoc. But he had room for other thoughts. A letter to M. Bouthillier, written on leaving Les Caves, is attractive in its detachment from the whirlpool of politics and war.

"I cannot leave your house to pursue my way," he writes, "without thanking you for the good cheer Madame Bouthillier has bestowed on us; which was such, that if you had yourself been here you could have added nothing to it. . . . Also I must tell you that whereas you described this house as a farm, it may be called a very fine and pretty house, leaving nothing to be desired but the building of a gallery on the left hand of the entrance, in order to match the right wing. . . ." In a postscript, the Cardinal advises M. Bouthillier as to the purchase of a château at Pont-sur-Yonne, where in later years, rich and beneficent, M. le Surintendant and his wife often entertained royalty.

A month later found Louis XIII. and his army at the foot of the Alps, on the frontiers of France and Piedmont. Some negotiations between Richelieu and the Prince of Piedmont, the King's brother-in-law, having ended in

nothing, the French proceeded to invade Savoyard territory. It was not an easy matter, in the first days of March, over mountain paths buried in snow, to reach and to storm the rocky and barricaded gorge which, beyond Mont Genèvre on the French side, led to the fortified town of Susa, the gateway of Piedmont. The whole gorge was commanded by Spanish and Piedmontese troops, firing down on the invaders; the Duke of Savoy himself was in the field.

In the dark hours of early morning, Louis XIII. led his regiments to the attack. Plunging on foot through the snow, "freely hazarding his person," says Aubery, "and running the same risk as the least soldier in his army," the story goes that the victory was largely owing to his own resolute courage. The marshals in command, they say, and even the Cardinal, were inclined to hesitate at an adventure that looked so dangerous. The King climbed the mountain and met a goatherd, who showed him a path by which the barricades and their defenders could be out-flanked. While the main body, under the marshals, rushed furiously on the barricades and cleared the gorge at the point of the sword, the royal musketeers scaled the rocks and drove down the enemy, first to the barricades, then along the road to Susa. In the helpless rout of his troops the Duke of Savoy narrowly escaped being taken prisoner.

A few days were enough to reduce the romantic mountain town of Susa, and the relief of Casale followed at once; for the furious energy of the French, acting as one man under the inspiring force of Richelieu, was too much for Charles Emmanuel of Savoy. He sent his daughter-in-law in great magnificence to visit her royal brother at Susa, and hastily made a treaty with France, of which he was not long in repenting; but the immediate and necessary consequence was the retirement from Montferrat of the Spanish general, Don Gonzalez de Cordova. A half-promise that Philip IV. of Spain would induce the Emperor to grant the new Duke of Mantua his desired investiture was not so easy of fulfilment.

There were diplomatic wheels within wheels. While Richelieu's negotiations with Savoy and Spain were still in progress, Spain was turning a favourable ear to the Duc de Rohan, who proposed to "keep France in a state of war as long as His Catholic Majesty pleased"; undertaking that his party, if successful in establishing a Protestant republic in the south, should assure liberty of conscience and the free exercise of their religion to Catholics, on the condition of a handsome subsidy and pensions for himself and his brother. This agreement was actually signed at Madrid on May 3, when Richelieu was still at Susa, the King and the larger part of the army having already re-crossed the Alps and marched through Dauphiné to the Rhône. So far the prophecy had been fulfilled: the month of May had found the royal forces free to join Condé, Montmorency and d'Épernon, and thus to deal with the rebels in Languedoc.

They were not capable of much resistance. The brothers Rohan and Soubise, with their friends, had no regular army to oppose the King of France and his fifty thousand men. A recent treaty between France and England had deprived them of Charles I.'s possible help, and Richelieu's movements were far too quick for Spain. By the middle of May the royal armies had poured like a devastating torrent over Languedoc and part of Guienne, destroying the green crops, the growing corn, all the year's food of the strong little towns and villages, and driving the scattered people to the mountains. Every detail of the campaign was planned by Richelieu, and it was he who arranged that the King himself should escape the early summer heats by crossing the Cévennes to the Tarn country and carrying out there the general scheme of destruction.

The first step in the campaign was the decisive one, and cost more to both sides than all the rest. Privas on its high ridge, the gallant little stronghold of the Vivarais, seventeen years earlier the seat of a general Protestant Synod, was now called upon literally to give its life for the cause. After a fortnight's fighting siege, during which

many lives were lost, the inhabitants and the garrison insisted that their brave commander, St. André de Montbrun, should make terms with the King. These were refused, and the surrender had to be unconditional. Town and people were treated with terrible severity. Both besiegers and besieged have been blamed for a furious fire which broke out as the royal troops were entering the fortress; in the awful night of confusion and massacre that followed, Privas was sacked and burnt to the ground with every circumstance of savagery.

At such times Louis XIII. was hard and inflexible. He would have hanged St. André, had not the Cardinal intervened to save him. Indeed, on this occasion and others, Richelieu showed a humanity for which most writers have given him little credit. Towards political offenders he was indeed "the Iron Cardinal"—no mercy for those who came in the way of his great designs; but he had pity on the helpless fugitives of Privas.

He was ill in bed on the fatal night of May 29. "But in spite of his illness," writes Aubery, "having mounted his horse with two hundred gentlemen, he went himself to meet the crowd of inhabitants who had forsaken their homes and their goods; and among others he saved twelve young girls from sixteen to eighteen years old, caused them to be led in safety to the Château d'Autremont, and recommended them with much charity to the Lady of that place, who took great care of them. Afterwards one brought to him an infant of seven months, found in the arms of his dead mother; and having praised and rewarded the soldier for saving from among the dead him who had but begun to live, he gave the child a nurse, and commanded that he should be well brought up and should be called Fortunat de Privas. . . ."

That such actions should be remembered as exceptional, only proves what was then the usual fate of wretched non-combatants. The well-known horrors of the Thirty Years War, then raging in Germany, soon to be shared in by France, are witness enough. Compared with Tilly and Mansfeldt in their campaigns of mercenary ravage and

slaughter, Richelieu's dealings with the Huguenot faction appear, considering all things, actually gentle.

After the taking of Privas, the royal armies swept the south with little difficulty. One after another the towns and fortified villages opened their gates and laid down their arms, and when the King made his triumphal entry into Nîmes, early in July, Richelieu had attained the first great end of his policy; the Huguenot "state within the State" had practically ceased to exist.

The Duc de Rohan and the Protestants of the south, once conquered, were treated with moderation. A general amnesty was offered: Rohan retired to Venice, a free man. Liberty of conscience was assured by the confirmation of the Edict of Nantes. The one severe condition was the razing of all the Huguenot fortifications throughout the provinces. This had to be accepted and carried out, sorely against the will of the many proud little towns and village strongholds scattered through the mountains and valleys of that stern country, which now found themselves tame and defenceless under the power of the Crown. Only one town, Montauban of fighting memory, stood out and refused to destroy the walls and towers that were her glory and pride. She refused so obstinately that the King, tired of his hot campaign, began his journey back to Paris on July 15, leaving the Cardinal, himself ill of fever, to bring her to reason.

This he did with such success, after two or three weeks of argument, the Montauban deputies following him from town to town, that they at last consented to swallow the bitter pill of complete submission. In the middle of August he entered Montauban peaceably with a strong force, and was received with almost royal honours and specially harangued by the Protestant ministers. After lingering a few days to see the destruction of the ramparts well begun, "il retourna triomphant à Paris, au grand crève-cœur de ses ennemis."

But those enemies were increasing in number, strength, and confidence. The chances seemed far more even to lookers-on of that day than to us, who possess the balances

of history. The reigning Queen, the Queen-mother, Monsieur, all the princes of the blood except Condé—Alexandre de Vendôme had died at Vincennes in the early spring of 1629, and his family held Richelieu responsible—most of the great nobles and ladies of the Court; statesmen such as Michel de Marillac; Marshals of France such as his brother Louis, lately promoted to that rank, Bassompierre, and others; ecclesiastics such as the Cardinal de Bérulle—all these, openly or secretly, for personal or political reasons, were opposed to Richelieu. He had his hearty adherents, the followers of his star, but they were few and rather clever than powerful. His only real support was the King. And Louis XIII. showed considerable strength of character in standing by his Minister against such odds, social and religious.

Arriving victorious at Fontainebleau, Richelieu was received with angry coldness by Marie de Médicis. He had not only carried out the policy she hated as to Mantua, Spain, and Savoy, but he had shown the rebel Huguenots what seemed to her a scandalous toleration. A furious jealousy of his influence with the King was so evident a motive of her rage, that the Cardinal found it politic to bow before the storm.

Once more he solemnly offered his resignation to the King; once more Louis, torn between the claims of his mother and his Minister, having spent a day in tears, refused to receive it. On the contrary, he heaped fresh honours on the Cardinal. By letters patent he became "chief Minister of State," the first time in French history that such an appointment had been formally made. A kind of peace was patched up with the Queen-mother. She and her friends only bided their time; the death of Cardinal de Bérulle, a few days after Richelieu's return from the south, removed one of the best of her counsellors and left her more completely in the hands of a violent faction.

Now, in the autumn, the Duke of Mantua found himself again in a desperate plight. The Emperor Ferdinand, victorious over the Protestants of the north, turned to revenge the check that France had given to his feudal

authority and to the armies of Spain. The unlucky Grisons found their country once more overrun, this time by an imperial army under Marshal Colalto, which descended the Val Tellina and stormed across the Lombard plain to the siege of Mantua, very slightly hindered by a Venetian force which had come to the Duke's aid. At the same time the valiant old Marquis Spinola, the Spanish governor of Milan, invaded Montferrat and again besieged Casale, where M. de Toiras, the hero of the Isle of Ré, was now in command.

It looked as if the French were to lose all advantages gained by their brilliant spring campaign. The whole aspect of affairs was alarming, for the danger was not only that which the Duke of Mantua's imploring letters pressed upon the King. Imperial armies were massing on the eastern frontier of France, threatening Champagne, and it was necessary that a French force should be sent to watch them. The Duke of Lorraine's loyalty was uncertain. It cannot have been without misgivings that Richelieu placed that gate of the kingdom in charge of his suspected enemy Louis de Marillac, with Monsieur, the light and treacherous, in nominal chief command.

As to himself, he left Court intrigues behind him, left his master to the persuasions of men and women who hated him, and accepted the royal commission of "Lieutenant-Général de là les Monts," which not only gave him the supreme command of the new Italian campaign, but made him the actual representative of Royalty in all matters political and military. No Constable of France had ever reached such a height of delegated power.

At ten o'clock in the morning of December 29 he took leave, says Aubery, of the King and the Queens at the Louvre. "He then dined in the chamber of Madame de Combalet, his niece, then lady-in-waiting to the Queen-mother, and towards three o'clock in the afternoon he mounted into his coach, having with him the Cardinal de la Valette and the Duc de Montmorency, who were both at one *portière*, and the Maréchaux de Bassompierre and de Schomberg at the other. Outside

the gates of the Louvre he was joined by a troop of a hundred cavaliers, all men of rank, who accompanied him for half a league outside the city, where his train and his guards awaited him. . . . Thus he took his way, in the depth of winter, to carry succour to Montferrat, leaving the Court and Paris in a season whose rigour is particularly felt in the open country."

Letters written by the Cardinal from Lyons show how his thoughts lingered behind at Paris, among the enemies and friends he had left there. Having obtained a piece of the True Cross from the Célestins at Avignon, he sent it, with a letter, to Marie de Médicis, by the hands of his niece, her lady-in-waiting. Enclosed with the treasure was a confidential letter to Madame de Combalet—one of his three friends in Marie's household, the other two being his cousin Charles de la Meilleraye, captain of the guard, and Denys Bouthillier de Rancé, private secretary—asking her to beg from Her Majesty the favour of three lines in her own hand, to be shown to those who made it their business to inquire if she had written to him. Such lines would be of more value, he says, than whole sheets from the secretary, "qui est bon pour d'autres, mais non pour une antienne créature."

The odd touch of something like sentiment, appealing to the Queen's memory, seems to justify what has been said of the great Cardinal—that he did not understand women. It looks as if he had persuaded himself that the recent reconciliation would be lasting, that Marie had forgotten her grudges and might be expected, in his interest, to silence the curious and the impertinent.

A campaign against Germany and Spain sounded formidable, but in fact it resolved itself into a duel between Cardinal de Richelieu and the Duke of Savoy. That cunning old prince did not at once break through the Treaty of Susa, which bound him to take the French side in case the Duke of Mantua was again attacked by Spain; but he did his best, by every device in his power, to hinder the march of the French army. The danger did indeed become less immediate; plague, fever, and floods

forced Marshal Colalto to retire from Mantua, and M. de Toiras held his own in Casale. Even before Richelieu had crossed the mountains, the Pope's intervention brought about some talk of peace, while Charles Emmanuel made endless difficulties as to the terms on which the French, to gain Montferrat, should pass through the territories of Savoy.

But all these delays only made Richelieu more resolute and more impatient. He descended into Dauphiné, swept an army over the Alps in terrible weather, and took up his quarters at Susa, still in French hands. Charles Emmanuel continued the game he was playing with both sides; the Cardinal soon knew that while negotiating with him as to joint action against Spain the Duke was in communication with the Spanish and imperial commanders, was trying to make sure of the passes behind the French army, and was delaying the supplies purchased with French gold for Casale. The Duke seemed, in fact, to hold the key of the situation.

This state of things did not last long. It may be said that when the Marquis du Chillou exchanged sword for crosier France lost a great field-marshal; yet it is only partly true. Over and over again Richelieu the soldier proved himself the match in genius, will, and spirit of Richelieu the cardinal and statesman. The conqueror of La Rochelle was now fully equal to the difficult campaign forced upon him by the disloyal movements of the Duke of Savoy.

Instead of crossing the frontier into Montferrat, to the immediate relief of Casale, Richelieu marched his 22,000 men on Rivoli, where his false ally, with his sons and the armed forces of Savoy, lay in wait to command the French rear. At the news of this advance, Duke and princes, Savoyards and Piedmontese, fled back pell-mell to Turin.

It was one of the picturesque moments in Richelieu's life. At the dawn of a March day, under torrents of rain and hail, he forded the swollen river Dora at the head of his cavalry. The infantry crossed by a narrow bridge. Horse and foot were alike in a bad humour, after many

days of forced marches in terrible weather by mountain and plain. They cursed their leader freely enough as he splashed through the ford and caracoled on the farther bank, armed to the teeth and escorted by pages and guards. Little trace of the ecclesiastic in that handsome general officer, his worn face under a feathered hat, a steel cuirass on his body, ready to share in all the hardships of his discontented men. In his *Memoirs* Richelieu has nothing but good to say of the soldiers, whose insolence, according to others, vexed him at the time. "The poor soldiers did their duty gaily," he writes. But the next day all grievances were forgotten. In snug quarters at Rivoli, drinking the Duke of Savoy's good wine and devouring his stores, the men were shouting merrily, "Vive le grand Cardinal de Richelieu!"

He was too wise to advance against Spain and Austria, leaving Savoy and Piedmont to attack him in the rear. His next move really decided the war. He swept back towards the mountains, took Pinerolo after a short siege, and seized on several strong frontier places, the gateways of the Alps between Dauphiné and Piedmont. Once more, as in earlier centuries, "France held the keys of Italy."

The war dragged on through the summer; its history must be read elsewhere. The Court moved to Lyons, and Richelieu met the King at Grenoble early in May. Together, in a short and easy campaign, they conquered Savoy. Chambéry opened its gates on May 15.

The extreme unhealthiness of the season—plague raging in Northern Italy—prevented Louis from personally taking the command of his Italian army. From St. Jean de Maurienne he and the Cardinal watched the course of events, while sending the Duc de Montmorency across Mont Cenis with troops to reinforce the marshals in command at Pinerolo. The combined armies made fresh conquests and behaved magnificently; but the great heat and the ravages of disease were enemies as formidable as Spaniards and Imperialists, who on their side held doggedly to their objects and gained at least one tremendous success. The storming of Mantua by the Emperor's troops on the

night of July 17 was a crime against civilisation. Art treasures never to be replaced were lost and destroyed in the sack of the old Gonzaga palace on its gleaming lake, a shrine of Renaissance beauty since the days of Isabella d'Este.

Immediately after this catastrophe Charles Emmanuel of Savoy died of despair at the loss of his towns and provinces. His son, the husband of Madame Christine of France, was more alive to the wisdom of an alliance with Louis XIII. An obstacle was thus removed from the path of the peace negotiations, which went on in spite of active war all through the summer and the early autumn; the chief agents in them being Père Joseph, at the Diet of Ratisbon, and a young Italian diplomat in the service of the Pope, named Giulio Mazarini.

When, late in October, the war ended with the retirement of the Austrians and Spaniards, the relief of Casale, and the restoration of Mantua to Duke Charles, it seemed as if Richelieu's triumphs abroad and at home were signal and complete. And yet, at this very time, he was on the edge of destruction.

CHAPTER VI

1630

Illness of Louis XIII.—"Le Grand Orage de la Cour"—The "Day of Dupes."

LOUIS XIII., always weak in health, suffered seriously from the pestilential air of that summer. In August he rejoined the Court at Lyons, where he fell ill of fever and dysentery, and the Cardinal, hurrying back from Savoy, found his royal master almost in extremity. By the end of September, after seven bleedings in one week, the case was given up as hopeless. Louis received the last Sacraments, the whole Court believed him dying, and a swift courier summoned Gaston d'Orléans from Paris. That "blind and frivolous instrument of the enemies of the State" became suddenly a personage of the very highest importance.

Richelieu, as he watched his dying master, was probably the most deeply troubled man in all the distracted Court. "He saw," writes M. Martin, "his power crumbling, his life threatened, his work, even dearer to him than life—his work, hardly sketched out, on the brink of destruction, his country falling back into the abyss from which he had raised her."

He was indeed in imminent danger. His enemies, the Queen-mother in chief, flattered themselves that his fate was at last in their hands. The King's death was to be the signal for his arrest. In the meanwhile, Marie held counsel with her friends as to what should be done with him. All, according to tradition, held different opinions. Some condemned him to death, and among these, to his

own undoing, was the Maréchal de Marillac. Some were for lifelong imprisonment; the mildest talked of perpetual exile. The story goes that Richelieu, the omniscient, always well served by spies and himself ready to play the part on occasion, listened to the debate through a chink hidden by tapestry. Further, that there came a day when each of his enemies met the fate he had recommended for the Cardinal.

Louis XIII. was well aware of the danger in which his death would leave his most distinguished servant. He respected Richelieu, even if he had not, in his own queer way, a kind of affection for him. At this crisis he sent for the Duc de Montmorency—with all his faults, one of the most generous and chivalrous of Frenchmen—and commended the Cardinal to his protection. It seems that Montmorency had already offered it, with a safe refuge in his government of Languedoc. These facts added bitterness to the terrible events of two years later.

Montmorency's kindness was not needed. An internal abscess broke, and the King began to recover. But the Cardinal's position was far from safe. During days of weary convalescence, the tender nursing of Louis' mother and his wife gained for them a new and strong influence over his mind. Perhaps Queen Anne's hatred of the Cardinal was even more thorough-going than that of her mother-in-law; and she had more power to injure him, if the malicious Court gossip of the day is at all based on facts. Had he really made love to her, in his awkward and pedantic fashion? It is only fair to say that M. Avenel, his most thorough and careful student, could find not one line of certain evidence for any of the stories of this kind that were told against him.

However, the voices of the two women prevailed so far that Louis, weak and exhausted, made them a kind of conditional promise. He could not dispense with his Minister while the war in Italy still went on. Let that be successfully ended—and then, possibly, he might see his way towards ending Richelieu's career.

With this prospect in view, the Queen-mother waited

patiently. When the news of peace arrived, the Court had just accomplished its journey, made chiefly by river, from Lyons to Paris, and it was noticed by the way that Her Majesty accepted the Cardinal's company and respectful attention, treating him, apparently, with all her former confidence. It seemed to ignorant spectators only natural that she should celebrate the relief of Casale, the end of the war, with bonfires and fireworks: the Princesse de Conti hardly needed her frank explanation: "It is not at the Duke of Mantua's good luck, but at the Cardinal's ruin, that I rejoice."

But the *feux de joie* blazed too soon. Marie found that her son, restored to health and victorious, was not quite ready to dismiss the genius to whom his kingdom owed so much. It was a bitter disappointment. Marie held her more violent feelings in check, listened perforce to the King's assurances of Richelieu's loyalty, and consented to meet him on the royal Council as usual. She was even prepared for a formal reconciliation with her "antienne créature," to be sealed by receiving back Madame de Combalet into the service and favour from which she had been dismissed some months before.

But here Marie's dissembling ended; and on November 9, 1630, with a burst of feminine fury, began that "grand orage de la Cour" which threatened to break Armand de Richelieu in full upward flight: the man already feared by Catholic Europe and the hope of the northern Protestants, with whose new leader, Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden, his diplomacy was even now allying France.

Madame de Combalet appeared that morning at the Luxembourg, and was received by the Queen-mother and the King in all the splendour of the new palace, with its silver-framed windows, its walls and ceilings decorated by great artists, already the admiration of Europe. Madame de Combalet herself was made for Courts, though she disliked and despised them. Still young and very handsome, her quiet dignity was at home anywhere: in the Carmelite convent from which all her uncle's persuasion and authority had hardly withdrawn her; at the head of

his house; or, as now, at the feet of frowning Royalty. On her knees she made the Queen a polite and respectful speech, begging to be restored to favour. At first Marie was stiff and cold; then she became angry; then, as rage got the better of her ponderous temperament, she forgot all her promises and poured out on the unlucky lady such a torrent of abuse and insult that Louis himself stepped forward, gave his hand to Madame de Combalet, and asked her to retire. A nervous, sensitive woman, it was no wonder that she left the presence in floods of tears.

The Cardinal, arriving by appointment for his own audience of reconciliation, met his niece at the door. The sight of her face was so sharp a warning that he hesitated, we are told, before passing on. In the meanwhile the Queen-mother was assuring her son that she had not changed her mind: her reception of the Cardinal would be all he could desire. This was an affair of State; the disgrace of a useless creature like la Combalet could signify to no one.

If Marie believed in her own intention, she reckoned without her passionate temper. It is true that she received the Cardinal with tolerable graciousness, but many minutes had not passed before her tone changed for the worse. "Peu à peu, la marée monte": the rising tide of anger. Richelieu heard himself called an ungrateful, perfidious knave, a traitor to his King and country. The Queen-mother refused to sit with him any more on the Council. Along with Madame de Combalet, La Meilleraye, and Denys Bouthillier, he was roughly dismissed from her service—he still held his old charge of superintendent of her household. He might go, she said at last, and never willingly would she look upon his face again.

Richelieu listened quietly. He attempted no useless prayer or argument, but bowed, and went.

There was something of a scene between Louis XIII. and his mother. Marie justified herself with success, as it seemed to her, solemnly assuring the King that Richelieu was in every way false to him; that his secret ambition was "to marry his niece to the Comte de Soissons and to

make the Comte King." These and many more accusations she poured into the sullen ears of her son. Let him be rid of this evil man, this terrible Minister, the ruin of France! Let him put his trust in faithful servants such as the brothers Marillac. With Michel as First Minister and Louis as Commander-in-chief, the safety and honour of France would be assured. But before all things let him keep his promise and be rid of Richelieu.

A stronger man than Louis XIII. would have found the position a difficult one. He had to choose between his mother—on whose side were his wife, his brother, nearly all the Court and half the kingdom—and the Minister whose personal influence over him was considerable, and on whom, as reason told him, the greatness of France, both within and without, now very largely depended. Duty to his mother, duty to his country—Louis XIII. had a conscience, and it was torn in two.

He was lodging at the Hôtel des Ambassadeurs, in the Rue de Tournon—once Concini's house, sacked by the mob in 1616—for he had come up from Versailles to visit the Queen-mother, and the Louvre was under repair. He walked back from the Luxembourg, shut himself into his room with his gentleman-in-waiting, Saint-Simon—a wise young man whom Richelieu, luckily for himself, had appointed to the post—tore the buttons off his coat in a violent fit of nerves, and flung himself on the bed.

Presently he poured out his worried soul to Saint-Simon. What did he think of the Queen-mother's conduct, and of the whole affair? The young man was very discreet; but he reminded the King that he was a king, as well as a son, and ventured to give his opinion that "the Cardinal was necessary to France." "Enfin, sire, vous êtes le maître." "Yes, I am," said Louis, "and they shall feel it."

The next day—Sunday, November 10, St. Martin's Eve—Louis went again to the Luxembourg. He was resolved, it seems, to have his way, and to persuade or command his mother to change her mind. Bassompierre attended him to the palace, and gives some vivid details of the

interview in the Queen's cabinet, although neither he nor any other courtier was present. He says that while the King and his mother were talking, all the doors being carefully shut, "Monsieur le Cardinal arrived; who, finding the door of the ante-chamber fastened, entered the gallery and knocked at the door of the cabinet, but no one replied. At length, impatient of waiting, knowing the ways of the house, he passed through the little chapel, the door of which had not been closed: thus M. le Cardinal entered the cabinet. The King was somewhat astonished, and said to the Queen with dismay: 'Here he is.' M. le Cardinal, who perceived their astonishment, said to them: 'I am sure you were talking of me.' The Queen answered him: 'We were not.' On which he having replied to her, 'Confess it, madame,' she said it was so, and upon that spoke against him with great sharpness, declaring that she would have no more to do with him, and many other things."

Richelieu preserved his sphinx-like patience. To Marie's insults and reproaches he answered not a word; but he realized that he was in danger, and he did his best to soften the angry woman by pleading for himself, even with tears—which, says an enemy, he had at command—declaring his innocence and his entire devotion to Her Majesty.

The Queen, on her side, wept passionately, crying out that all he said and did was knavery and mummery. Then, turning to her son, she asked him if he preferred "un valet" to his mother; for he must choose between them two.

"Then it is only natural that I should be sacrificed," said the Cardinal; and immediately, once more, he offered his resignation to the troubled King, begging to be allowed to retire to some place where he might end his days in repose.

To all appearance Louis accepted his resignation and granted his request, even advising him to retire to Pontoise. Cardinal de Richelieu left the palace and went back to his hôtel, the Petit-Luxembourg—the Palais-Cardinal, though

in progress, was not yet finished—with every reason to believe himself a disgraced and ruined man.

It is not likely that Louis really intended to part with his Minister. But it was touch-and-go. He had gained time by pacifying his mother for the moment, and had thought to do wisely by removing the hated object from her sight. His next step was to send envoys to reason and negotiate at the Luxembourg. Père Suffren, the royal confessor, and Cardinal Bagni, the Pope's Nuncio, both did their best, but absolutely in vain. At the moment of her suddenly snatched triumph, Marie de Médicis was not likely to listen to them. Early the next morning the King hurried back to his hunting-lodge at Versailles. It looked as though his promises of four years ago had been mere waste of breath and of paper, for he had not seen Richelieu again. With regard to the two Marillacs, he had seemingly obeyed his mother. Michel, as Minister, was summoned to follow His Majesty to Versailles, and a courier rode off post-haste for Italy, carrying despatches which appointed Louis to the chief command of the army.

This was St. Martin's Day, Monday, November 11, the "Journée des Dupes."

News of the Cardinal's fall spread swiftly through Paris. The Parisians did not love him: his good work in improving the city, carrying on the additions to the Louvre, building a new bridge, rebuilding the Sorbonne at his own cost, was counterbalanced by acts of tyranny. Citizens had been more or less forced to sell their houses, vegetable gardens had been seized, a part of the old wall of Charles V. had been destroyed, all to make room for the Palais-Cardinal. On that Monday morning all Paris, high and low, courtiers and *canaille*, ran in crowds to the Luxembourg to congratulate the Queen-mother on her victory. In and round the palace the crush of the dupes was so great that there was no room to move. Marie, the centre of it, saw herself once more a ruler in France, her son submissive, her faithful friends rewarded, her enemy ruined and exiled. Some wise man advised her to make assurance sure by following the King to Versailles; she

laughed the counsellor away. Why hide in the woods when there was so much to be done in the city?—ambassadors sending couriers half over Europe; joyful meetings with Queen Anne, with Monsieur; audiences of great lords and ladies, one by one; all the happy, noisy, popular confusion of a sudden return to power.

Close by, at the Petit-Luxembourg, Richelieu had his moment of despair. To fall from so great a height meant death, at least to all his ambitions; perhaps literally, for his enemies, so many and so strong, would hardly be satisfied with exile. And he knew the nature of the King. Held by his own strong influence, all was well, but Louis was too nervous to endure such scenes as those of the last few days, if by any possible sacrifice he could end them. Richelieu might be the victim of the King's hatred of worry as much as of the Queen-mother's hatred of himself.

Several far-seeing men had the courage to separate themselves from the crowd pressing to the greater Luxembourg. One of these was the Cardinal de la Valette, the ugly, generous, soldierly second son of the Duc d'Épernon; another, the Marquis de Châteauneuf, a distinguished Councillor of State, afterwards ruined by his passion for Madame de Chevreuse; another, that worthy man the Marquis de Rambouillet, whose wife had for some years reigned over half society from her hôtel near the Louvre. These good friends, with a few others, would not allow Richelieu to despair. Though his papers were packed and his coach was ordered for the journey to Pontoise, they entreated him not to go. Cardinal de la Valette reminded him of the old proverb, "Qui quitte la partie la perd," and gave the advice—to wiser ears than the Queen's—that he should follow his royal master to Versailles, on the pretext of bidding him farewell. In the midst of their discussion some one arrived from Versailles with a verbal message from Saint-Simon, advising the same course. This strong and direct encouragement had a marvellous effect on Richelieu's depressed spirits. "Transported with joy, he kissed the messenger on both cheeks."

No time was lost, we may well believe. The Cardinal's coach rumbled out of Paris, but his horses' heads were turned to the south-west, not to the north. In a long private interview with the King he regained all he had seemed to lose, and took a final and solid hold on power. The courtiers, being admitted, heard from the King's own lips that he ordered the Cardinal to remain with him, serving him well as before; "that he would find means to appease his mother and to gain her consent to what he did, while removing from her those persons who gave her pernicious counsel."

The Cardinal was treated in a princely manner and lodged in the château, a special mark of favour in days when Versailles was only a small country-house in the midst of immense forests. From his lodging, the next day, he wrote several letters. One was to the King, expressing his extreme satisfaction and extraordinary gratitude, assuring him that never was servant so devoted to his master's glory, declaring to His Majesty "que je suis la plus fidèle créature, le plus passionné sujet, et le plus zélé serviteur que jamais roy et maître ait eu au monde. Je vivray et finiray en cet estat, comme estant cent fois plus à Vostre Majesté qu'à moy-mesme. . . ."

He also wrote to his sister, the Marquise de Brézé, and to his uncle, Amador de la Porte. Knowing that "common report often represents things as other than they are," he first tells the news of his disgrace with the Queen-mother, who finds his own services, those of his niece de Combalet and of his cousin La Meilleraye, no longer agreeable to her. But he begs his sister and his uncle not to be amazed or afflicted by this misfortune, since it arose from no fault; and also because he has the consolation of the King's presence and favour. To the old Commander, irritable and garrulous, he adds a word of discreet counsel. "As I am not capable of any other desire than to live and die the Queen's servant, I pray you always to speak conformably to this. I warn you, knowing your freedom of speech, and that you might be carried away by the affection you bear me. It would not be reasonable that all my obligations to

so good a princess should be forgotten because personally I now disgust her."

He could afford to appear magnanimous. Even as he wrote the news was flying to Paris, not only of his triumph, but of the utter discomfiture of the Queen-mother's party and the ruin of her friends. Michel de Marillac, the Chancellor, had been arrested and deprived of the seals, which were given to the Marquis de Châteauneuf. The courier who conveyed the news of his high appointment to the Maréchal de Marillac was followed at once by another, bearing the King's command that the Maréchal de Schomberg should arrest him. On the very evening of St. Martin's Day, well named "Day of Dupes," Richelieu's swift vengeance was already overtaking his enemies. A few hours later Marie de Médicis was alone in her deserted Luxembourg. Courtiers and *canaille* were rushing to meet the King's coach as he drove into Paris, with Cardinal de Richelieu at his *portière*.

CHAPTER VII

1631—1632

Flight from France of the Queen-mother and Monsieur—New honours for Cardinal de Richelieu—The fall of the Marillac brothers—The Duc de Montmorency and Monsieur's ride to Languedoc—Castelnaudary—The death of Montmorency—Illness and recovery of the Cardinal.

A FEW months were enough to rid Cardinal de Richelieu of his most active enemies. One after another, in the first half of the year 1631, they disappeared from the scene by exile or imprisonment, in some cases ending in death.

After the crushing disappointment of the "Day of Dupes," Marie de Médicis submitted to a kind of reconciliation with her "former creature" who had so convincingly proved his strength. Gaston d'Orléans too, led by his favourites, M. de Puylaurens and Président Le Coigneux, whom Richelieu thought it worth while to bribe heavily, visited the Cardinal and promised him his friendship. But it was not to be expected that either mother or son should be in earnest. Gaston hardly needed the discontent of his favourites—eager for places and honours which the Cardinal was not in a hurry to give—to throw him once more into violent opposition.

On January 30, attended by a dozen gentlemen, the young Prince appeared at the Petit-Luxembourg. He told the Cardinal "that he had come to retract the promise of friendship which he had given him a few days before; on the contrary, to declare his resentment that a man of his sort should so far have forgotten himself as to set the royal family in a blaze. That, owing his whole fortune and

elevation to the Queen his benefactress, instead of proving his gratitude, as a good man and a faithful servant would have done, he had become her chief persecutor, by his artifices continually blackening her in the eyes of the King; and that as to himself, he had treated him not only without respect, but with insolence! And that he would have reproved him sooner, had he not been restrained by his quality as a priest; but that this would not save him in the future from the quite extraordinary treatment deserved by the gravity of his offences against personages of such dignity."

"This discourse," continues the chronicler, "was made with so much heat and such threatening gestures of hands and eyes, that the Cardinal made no answer, not knowing whether it was all in earnest or only meant to frighten him."

The moment was alarming enough, for Monsieur's people, so fierce were their looks, seemed to be waiting their moment to fall upon their prey. The Prince went down to his coach in a terrible humour, swearing and threatening all the way, while the Cardinal attended him bare-headed and prudently silent. It was not till the blustering company had driven off that he regained his usual composure. None the less, we are assured, he was extremely glad to see the King, who came dashing "à toute bride" to the door, as his champion and protector, not many minutes later.

Monsieur left Paris immediately for Orléans, where he swaggered for some weeks and tried to rouse a civil war by posing as a friend to the populace and a resister of taxation. Since he refused to submit to his brother and to return to Court, Richelieu was prepared to bring him to his senses by armed force. But he preferred self-banishment. In the middle of March he rode across country to Besançon, and then took refuge with the Duke of Lorraine. He was followed into exile by a number of persons of quality, notably his half-brother the Comte de Moret, the Duc d'Elbeuf, brother-in-law of the Duc de Vendôme, the Duc de Bellegarde, governor of Burgundy, and M. and Madame

du Fargis, in disgrace at Court because of their intimate friendship with the brothers Marillac.

Each day of that winter and spring brought fresh and painful experience to Marie de Médicis. She saw herself checked in every direction by an enemy who worked with extraordinary prudence, keeping all the outward forms of due respect while he lured her gradually to ruin. No doubt her presence in Paris, her atmosphere of plot and intrigue, was dangerous to him, if not to the State. The question was, how to remove her from the centre of things without a public scandal.

In February the Court went to Compiègne for hunting, and to spend the Carnival. As Richelieu had foreseen, the Queen-mother was not deterred by "the incommodity of the season" from following the King: she would not repeat her mistake of St. Martin's Day. At Compiègne the King made a last unsuccessful attempt to soften her heart towards the Cardinal. As she firmly refused to listen to any arguments, it was decided that she must be separated from a Court in which her presence was a centre for the factious and the ill-intentioned.

The Château of Compiègne was roused early on the morning of February 23. The King had announced that he would go hunting at dawn; and in fact he and the Cardinal, with a large attendance, rode out of the gates before either of the Queens was awake. Instead of turning into the dim glades of the forest, the royal party rode hard for Paris.

Père Suffren, the Maréchal d'Estrées—formerly known as Marquis de Coenores—and a Secretary of State, M. de la Ville-aux-Clercs, were left behind with the King's apologies and farewells to his mother, whom he never saw again. They were also entrusted with a letter, begging Her Majesty to retire to Moulins, where she might live in all honour and liberty as governor of the Bourbonnais; it being understood that in her present mind she was no longer welcome at Court. This very unpleasant news was broken to Marie before she left her bed, not by the appointed messengers, but by Queen Anne, her daughter-in-law, who paid her a

hurried visit before following the King, and parted from her with embraces and tears. "Both," says Madame de Motteville, "were deeply moved at finding themselves the victims of the Cardinal de Richelieu, their common enemy. It was the last time they saw each other."

As to Moulins, Marie would have none of it. She could not openly refuse to obey the King, but her excuses dragged on from day to day: bad roads and wintry weather; an epidemic in the Bourbonnais; the ruinous state of the Château de Moulins; a severe cold which kept her in her room. All the spring royal messengers were galloping between Compiègne and Paris. Sometimes they carried persuasion, sometimes threats. If the Queen-mother disliked the Bourbonnais, would she accept her old abode of Angers, with the government of Anjou? Let her remember that no law in Holy Scripture obliged a son to live always with his mother when of age to govern himself, whereas we are enjoined in divers places to obey the King, as God's lieutenant on earth. And many more arguments; but in short, her disobedience was insupportable, and would in the end force the King to treat her more rigorously.

It appeared that of her own free will she would never leave Compiègne. In spite of the great courtesy shown her by M. d'Estrées, in command of the guard—every morning he came to her for the pass-word, and every night offered her the keys of the town—she treated herself as a prisoner. As the season advanced, though free of all the country round, she never went beyond the castle walls, hoping thus, says Aubery, to excite general hatred against the Cardinal.

In the meanwhile her friends disappeared one by one. Her physician, Vautier, was flung into the Bastille; the same fate befell the unlucky Bassompierre. The Duc de Guise, intriguing for Monsieur, his stepson-in-law, in his government of Provence, was forced to fly to Italy, a lifelong exile as it proved. The Princesse de Conti, the Duchesse d'Elbeuf (Henriette de Vendôme), the Duchesse de Roannez, the Maréchale d'Ornano, and other

great ladies, were ordered to retire to their country houses; and the brilliant Princesse de Conti, sister of Guise, the Queen-mother's constant friend, adored by Bassompierre, to whom they say she was secretly married, died at Eu of a broken heart on the last day of April.

In June a report reached the Queen-mother at Compiègne that a royal army was to be sent to remove her by force. If this story was invented with the object of driving her out of the kingdom, it served its end. On July 18, at ten o'clock at night, she left Compiègne on foot and almost alone—an easier escape than that from the Château de Blois. A coach and six, with outriders, was waiting in the shadow of the forest. The Queen intended to stop at La Capelle, a small strong place in Picardy, close to the frontier of the Low Countries: the governor, M. de Vardes, had promised to receive her. But this coming to Richelieu's ears, the father of M. de Vardes, who had formerly commanded at La Capelle, was sent post-haste from Paris to supersede his son, and the gates were shut against the fugitive Queen. She was thus obliged to cross the frontier, which she did, never to return; and was received with great honour at Avesnes in Artois, by the officers of the Archduchess Isabel.

So the great Henry's Florentine widow removed herself from the path of Cardinal de Richelieu; to his advantage and her own loss and ruin.

This political triumph was followed by new honours and personal dignities. For a year past he had borne, with other Cardinals, the new titles of *Eminentissime* and *Eminence*, decreed by Pope Urban VIII., and shared only by the ecclesiastical Electors of the Empire and the Grand Master of Malta. He had added to his worldly goods and to his spiritual power by becoming Coadjutor of the Abbot of Cluny, and the strength of his resolute will for reform was felt by the great religious orders as well as by the secular clergy.

In September 1631 letters patent from the King created him Duc de Richelieu and a peer of France, and he took his seat in Parliament with great state, escorted by the Prince

de Condé, the Duc de Montmorency, and a crowd of the first men in France. From that time he bore the singular title of "Cardinal-Duc." He also became governor of Brittany; and one fortified town after another, throughout the north of France, fell into his hands and were garrisoned by friends of his own. He rewarded the Prince de Condé and the Cardinal de la Valette with the governments of Burgundy and Anjou.

One foreign Power, at least, was not behindhand in paying homage to the man whom the King of France delighted to honour. The Republic of Venice sent him letters of Venetian nobility, to descend to any one of his relations he might choose. "And she sent them with ceremony by an express Gentleman, to whom His Eminence did not forget to present a very fine chain of gold."

It seemed that Richelieu had little now to fear from open enemies at home, though the secret dread of assassination clung about him with reason to his life's end. He had already shown a certain sense of security by acts of indulgence or of conciliation: the Duc de Vendôme had been set at liberty and the Duchesse de Chevreuse had been allowed to return to the Court, while her husband was made governor of Picardy. Champagne, the important frontier province, was given as a mark of royal confidence to the Comte de Soissons.

But there were those, not more guilty, but more dangerous from their very worth and mental distinction, who felt the weight of Richelieu's vengeance. Michel de Marillac, counted in his own time among "martyrs of the State," after languishing for many months in his prison at Châteaudun, died of grief at the tragic death of his soldier brother. The trial and death of Marillac "l'Epée" are generally allowed to be dark stains on the Cardinal's career. Politically, there was no case against him, and the Parliament, when first approached by Richelieu's tool, the notorious Laffemas, refused to commit him for trial. Richelieu then appointed a Royal Commission, which sat at Verdun, the charge against the Marshal being one of peculation and oppression when governor there. Even now the Cardinal

failed to secure a condemnation. The Commissioners shrank from enforcing the extreme of the law against a distinguished soldier whose sins were common to his time and his trade, and the trial dragged on very slowly, till Richelieu brought matters to a point by summoning the Commission, strengthened by members of his own choosing and presided over by the new Chancellor, M. de Châteauneuf, to meet at his country-house of Rueil. Louis de Marillac was brought from the fortress of Ste. Menehould, where he had been imprisoned since his sudden arrest some fifteen months before. He was condemned to death, but only by a small majority of his judges. Threatening letters from the Queen-mother and Monsieur did him no good, but yet the Cardinal, in his own house and with a packed jury, could not secure unanimity. All France agreed with the prisoner's own cry: "Condemned to die for hay and straw! Not reason enough to whip a lackey!"

He was beheaded in the Place de Grève on May 2, 1632, and buried in the Church of the Feuillants, long since swept away to make room for the Rue Castiglione. There might be read, for less than two hundred years, the simple and dignified epitaph in which his heirs handed down to posterity the high virtues of "this illustrious victim of a powerful and vindictive Minister." Madame de Marillac, who bore the familiar name of Catherine de Médicis, died of grief within a few months of her husband.

A dozen years later, when Cardinal de Richelieu was dead, the Parliament of Paris registered a decree acquitting Louis de Marillac of the crimes for which he ostensibly suffered.

In that same year 1632 a still nobler head was to fall. The story of Henry de Montmorency's ruin tangles itself with the treasonable adventures of Gaston d'Orléans.

Duke Charles of Lorraine, nominally a vassal of the Empire, had reasons of his own for giving trouble to France. For nearly a century she had held part of the old province of Lorraine, including the "Three Bishoprics," Metz, Toul, and Verdun. In giving armed support to the exiled French prince, Charles IV. had the Empire at his

back, and a successful invasion of France, with the consequent fall of Cardinal de Richelieu, was likely not only to restore his territory but to be a decisive incident in the Thirty Years' War. At this moment of happy expectation, Monsieur fell in love with the young Princess Marguerite of Lorraine, the Duke's sister. A year or two before he had been desperately in love with Princess Marie de Gonzague, daughter of the Duke of Mantua, and the Queen-mother had imprisoned her at Vincennes to be out of his way. This was a more serious affair. A secret, hurried marriage at Nancy united Gaston to the one woman who kept her hold on him through the rest of his frivolous life.

But even before the marriage, the Duke of Lorraine's plans of conquest had fallen through. French armies had crossed his frontier, driving before them the small force which the Emperor had sent to his aid. From the stronghold of Metz, Louis XIII. and Cardinal de Richelieu were able to dictate their own terms. The Duke of Lorraine was to become a faithful ally of France, and all her enemies were to be expelled from his territory. In consequence of this treaty, Monsieur joined his mother at Brussels. Left to himself, he might have been reconciled with the King, and Richelieu did his best to that end; but his own friends and favourites found it to their interest to keep him in rebellion.

It was not till after the signature of the treaty that Louis XIII. was made aware of his brother's marriage, to which he had definitely refused his consent. In this and other ways the Duke of Lorraine had played Richelieu false. The consequence was that a French army once more swept over the province, seizing towns and fortresses and bringing Richelieu's favourite dream—that of extending the French frontier to the Rhine—perceptibly nearer.

At this moment, having taught the Duke a second severe lesson, Richelieu held his hand. The victories of Gustavus Adolphus in Germany were an effectual check on the house of Hapsburg, and hindered the advance of the Spanish and Imperial troops on the Rhine. A French

army was needed at home. Monsieur had left Brussels with a small army of German, Walloon, and Spanish mercenaries, and had made a dash through Lorraine, Burgundy, and Auvergne on his way to Languedoc, with the encouragement of the Duc de Montmorency. Leaving Maréchal d'Effiat in command on the German frontier, Richelieu despatched Schomberg and La Force by different routes to the south.

Henry de Montmorency, by every title the flower of the French nobility, was now thirty-seven years old. He was descended in the direct line, through nineteen generations, from an ancestor who was baptized with Clovis. Ever since then the heads of the family had borne the proud legend of "Premier Chrestien que Roy en France; premier Seigneur de Montmorency que Roy en France; premier Baron de France." Their war-cry was "Dieu ayde au premier Chrestien"; their motto, "Sans tache." Montmorency's father, his grandfather, and several of his ancestors had borne the title of Constable of France, and he was himself High Admiral, till Richelieu purchased the charge and assumed the duties under another name. He had succeeded to the government of Languedoc at his father's death in 1614, before he was twenty. A popular governor of a very difficult province constantly torn by civil war, he spent the greater part of his time in the south. When not engaged in keeping down his turbulent Protestants or in managing his provincial Estates, always discontented, he was to be found in the front rank of Louis XIII.'s campaigns. He did not care greatly for life at Court, though, as a boy, he had been a special favourite with Henry IV., who gave him his name, and though, by the marriages of his half-sister and sister—one with the Duc d'Angoulême, the other with the Prince de Condé—he was nearly connected with the royal family. But he lived magnificently, when in Paris, at the Hôtel de Montmorency, and in the country at his châteaux of Écouen or Chantilly. He was the admiration of society—handsome, a bold rider, a fine dancer, and a very great flirt, in spite of the constant love between him and his young Roman

wife, the best and most devoted of women, Maria Felice Orsini. Their story is among the most touching romances of the century.

In many ways the Duc de Montmorency stood above the ordinary ranks of the noblesse, and a little apart from them. As proud and sensitive as any, a certain high touch of generous chivalry kept him free of their vindictive prejudices—as Cardinal de Richelieu had proved in the day when Louis XIII. lay ill at Lyons. His loyalty to the King had always been unimpeachable.

But as early as 1629 the storm which was to sweep Montmorency into rebellion and ruin had begun to growl in the south. The governor of Languedoc felt a dangerous sympathy with his province, one of the old independent *pays d'États*, which saw itself deprived of power and autonomy in the matter of taxation by a centralizing edict. In the view of the provincial Estates, their "most sacred rights" were thus invaded and torn away. And there were not wanting enemies of Richelieu to fan the flame.

At first it seemed as if the Cardinal would yield to the remonstrances of Languedoc. During the winter of 1631–2 Montmorency was able to announce to his Estates that the hated edict would be withdrawn. However, months dragged on in useless argument with the Cardinal's commissioners, who, in Montmorency's own view, were merely amusing the Estates while they led them on to a deeper ruin; while his friends whispered that he himself, as well as his province, was on the brink of destruction. Some slight coldness at Court, consequent on a quarrel of his with the Duc de Chevreuse, was made to signify that his political opposition to Richelieu, frank and reasonable as it might be, would bring about sharp and terrible reprisals.

In this temper the proudest noble and most chivalrous man in France read a manifesto published by Gaston d'Orléans in June 1632, in which he summoned the French to rise on behalf of himself and the exiled Queen-mother, not against the King, but against the "tyrant" who had

usurped his authority; while at the same time it was proposed to make Languedoc, already known to be disaffected, the scene of the new civil war.

There were circumstances which attached Montmorency to the Queen-mother's cause. His wife was related to her, and had always been treated by her with the utmost kindness. If he had shown a friendliness to Richelieu which may have justified the Cardinal in being amazed at the present turn of events, it was yet most natural that he should feel resentment at the Queen's forced exile. Richelieu and many historians following him have thrown the whole blame of the Duke's rising on Madame de Montmorency and her affection for the Queen. Recent researches have shown this view to be most unfair. Through the spring and early summer of 1632 the Duchess was lying ill of fever and knew little of public events. It was not till the latest moment, too late for any drawing back, that she heard from her husband of Monsieur's advance with his consent to Languedoc. With useless tears she learned that he, who had fought so loyally for the King, was now arming against him. When the Prince himself visited her on his arrival she said to him: "Sir, if M. de Montmorency could have deferred to the counsel of a woman, he would never have given you entrance into his government."

The fatal step was taken with the full concurrence of the Estates of Languedoc, in session at Pézénas. D'Elbène, Bishop of Albi, who has been described as Montmorency's evil genius, induced them formally to disregard the royal edict and to sign a solemn declaration in which they called on the Duke to make their interests his, as they would make his theirs, that all might act together for His Majesty's service and the good of their country. Thus "the Estates signed their final abdication; and the Duke his death-warrant."

Monsieur's ride through France, with a group of wild companions, at the head of two thousand undisciplined horse, was not likely to do his cause good in the country. Clamouring constantly for pay and receiving nothing but

fair words and promises, it was to be expected that the soldiers should provide for themselves. All along Monsieur's route, his biographer tells us, at the earliest news of his approach, people fled from the villages and open country into the towns, which one and all shut their gates. But it was the season of fruit and crops, "so that the army had not much to suffer." "Nous entrâmes dans la Limagne, qu'il faisoit beau voir en cette saison des fruits, si la licence des gens de guerre ne lui eût un moment fait changer de face." And the fate of the Limagne—the most fertile district of Auvergne—was a sample of the rest.

Monsieur and his precious army entered Languedoc in the first week of August, two months before the Duc de Montmorency was ready for him. The session of the Estates was only just over; there had been no time to raise money, to collect troops, or to make sure of several strong places whose loyalty to the governor was doubtful. The King had still a powerful party in Languedoc, and the people generally, with a bitter experience, dreaded civil war. Meanwhile, with swift decision, directed from Paris by Richelieu, Marshals de Schomberg and de la Force were advancing from the east and the west, hemming in Languedoc and its unlucky governor.

The armies met at Castelnaudary—spelt by Aubery Castelnau-d'Arry—and the result of the fight was never doubtful. Though Monsieur had had some small successes since entering Languedoc, his friends and officers spoiled all by quarrels among themselves. Puylaurens, the Duc d'Elbeuf, and the Comte de Moret, each claimed the leadership under him, and all refused to give precedence to the Duc de Montmorency. He was bitterly reproached for the unreadiness which was no fault of his; and he, at least, dashed forward in a spirit of reckless despair to the encounter with the Maréchal de Schomberg and the Marquis de Brézé, whose army, though small, was perfectly disciplined, while that of Monsieur fell almost at once into panic and confusion.

Castelnaudary was rather a rout than a battle. Many of the mercenaries fled without striking a blow, and those who died fighting were mostly among the unfortunate "gens de qualité" who had thrown in their lot with Monsieur. Among these victims the most distinguished was young Antoine de Bourbon, Comte de Moret, son of Henry IV. by Jacqueline de Bueil: she long survived as Comtesse de Vardes, a devout and eccentric lady. Many persons believed that her son, who had taken orders and held, with other rich preferments, the Abbey of St. Étienne at Caen, was carried off alive into Italy after Castelnaudary, and ended his days, sixty years later, as a pious hermit in Anjou. The tradition is not without probability.

No such uncertainty hangs round the fate of Henry de Montmorency. He fell wounded in a desperate charge along a hollow lane, made in support of the Comte de Moret, whose men were in full flight before the enemy. The lane was commanded by royal musketeers, who shot down all the Duke's followers except a few who dashed forward with him into the ranks of the "cardinalistes." "I have sacrificed myself for cowards!" Henry cried to the officer who took him prisoner—the Comte de Saint-Preuil, himself one day to be condemned by Richelieu.

The King and the Cardinal were on their way to Languedoc when the short campaign thus suddenly ended. To make peace with Monsieur was their first care, and this was easily brought about. At first his demands were haughty and considerable, including a large sum of money, the return of the Queen-mother, a fortress or two, and a free pardon for the Duc de Montmorency. All these conditions were bluntly rejected. Richelieu was not impressed by the Prince's solemn promise to love and esteem him in future.

Gaston's first thought was to escape to Spain, but the way was blocked by the royal troops, and a very few days saw him in abject submission to the King. He even promised—surely an unnecessary baseness—to take no

further interest in certain persons who had been united with him, and to make no complaint should the King punish them as they deserved. Having thus delivered up Montmorency and all those who had fought in his cause and the Queen-mother's, Gaston rode off for Touraine with the Duc d'Elbeuf and a few others whom the King pardoned, while the remnant of his army straggled across the mountains into Spain.

Then the King and the Cardinal, from their head-quarters at Béziers, set about arranging the affairs of Languedoc; and seldom, in his political career, did Richelieu show a greater wisdom. While tremendous severity was shown to bishops, barons, all the feudal magnates who had encouraged or joined in the rebellion—death, confiscation, tearing down of castles and fortresses—the provincial Estates were very differently treated. They were convoked at Béziers, and most of their just demands were granted by the King. On payment of a heavy fine they kept to some extent their ancient liberties.

But a terrible example was made. After Castelnaudary the wounded governor had been taken to the castle of Lectoure, and at the end of October, nearly two months later, he was brought to Toulouse to be tried for his life. The King and the Cardinal were already there, and all the prayers of province and kingdom, of high and low, had for six weeks been prayed in vain. The fact that M. de Montmorency was one of the very greatest men in France, that his pardon was humbly begged for not only by his miserable wife, but by the Princesse de Condé, the Duc d'Epernon and his sons, the Ducs d'Angoulême, de Châtillon, de Chevreuse, and many others, only made his condemnation more sure. Richelieu was bent on teaching France, once for all, the lesson she had been slow in learning, that no head was high enough to escape the vengeance of the King. He listened, not untouched certainly, but unmoved, even to the crying in the streets—"Grâce, grâce! Miséricorde!"—with which, night and day, the people of Toulouse tried to soften the hearts of King

and Minister. And if we are to believe the biographer of Père Joseph, any leanings towards mercy in either were checked by the fiery zeal of the "Eminence grise," who pressed upon them both, in secret council of three, that "to pardon this criminal would encourage all the rebels in the kingdom, who would not fail to invite Monsieur to place himself once more at their head, since they would be sure of impunity . . . whereas, a chief of this rank and quality being put to death, no one would henceforth dare to declare himself for the King's brother."

The trial, presided over by Richelieu's Chancellor, Châteauneuf, was short and decisive: there was no doubt of the result; but we are told that the judges wept when they pronounced the sentence, and the courtiers wept when they heard it. Henry de Montmorency died that same day, October 30, 1632, on the scaffold at Toulouse, patiently and bravely, as became the "premier Chrestien." In his will, made the day before, he left a valuable picture, a St. Sebastian, to Cardinal de Richelieu. The mourning throughout France was such as had not been seen since the death of King Henry IV.

Terrified by so sharp an object-lesson, Gaston d'Orléans made one more dash across France and again took refuge at Brussels. This was a consequence not at all intended by Cardinal de Richelieu.

Worry and strain, political anxieties constantly fresh, the knowledge that he was furiously hated by society, that dozens of desperate men had vowed to kill him, and were watching for their opportunity—a strong man would have felt the burden, and Richelieu, whatever the power of his spirit, was always delicate and frail of body. One of the worst illnesses of his life came upon him immediately after the death of the Duc de Montmorency.

The King hurried back to his hunting near Paris, and it had been arranged that the Cardinal should escort Queen Anne from Toulouse to Bordeaux, and then to La Rochelle, after which she was to honour him with a visit at his hardly finished, magnificent château and new town of

Richelieu. It was a bad time of year for travelling, and the Queen and her ladies, one may believe, thought the whole thing a bore; but the Eminentissime had his reasons for insisting, and could not be refused.

He was ill when they left Toulouse. At Bordeaux he became worse, and was forced to take to his bed; a few days more saw him in apparent extremity. A weight of bad news fell upon him. The loyal Maréchal de Schomberg died in Languedoc, where he had succeeded Montmorency as governor. The death of Gustavus Adolphus seemed at first a mortal blow to the Protestant cause and the allies of France in Germany.

The Queen and her Court did not remain at Bordeaux throughout the Cardinal's illness, but passed on to make their tour of the western provinces, his place as their entertainer being taken by the Commander de la Porte and the Marquis de la Meilleraye. The position was curious enough. At any moment news of the Cardinal's death might have overtaken them. All France believed that he was dying; rumours flew through the provinces that he was already dead. People held their breath an instant, then forgot prudence and rejoiced, ten years too soon, as though the report must be true. M. de Châteauneuf and Madame de Chevreuse behaved with a rashness that seems amazing, whatever his passion for her and whatever her hatred of Richelieu. Even before the Queen left Bordeaux, while the Cardinal's few devoted friends were watching by his sick bed, they, with the rest of the lively Court party, were dancing in public and private without even any outward show of anxiety, and it was they, in wild spirits, who made the dark and wintry journey to La Rochelle a *voyage de plaisir*. M. de Châteauneuf already imagined himself First Minister, and Madame de Chevreuse, ruling the Queen and him, saw France at her feet.

And then the Cardinal recovered. "From the gates of the tomb," says M. Martin, "he rose terrible and struck down those imprudent persons who had dared to reach out with a too hasty hand towards his spoils." The King

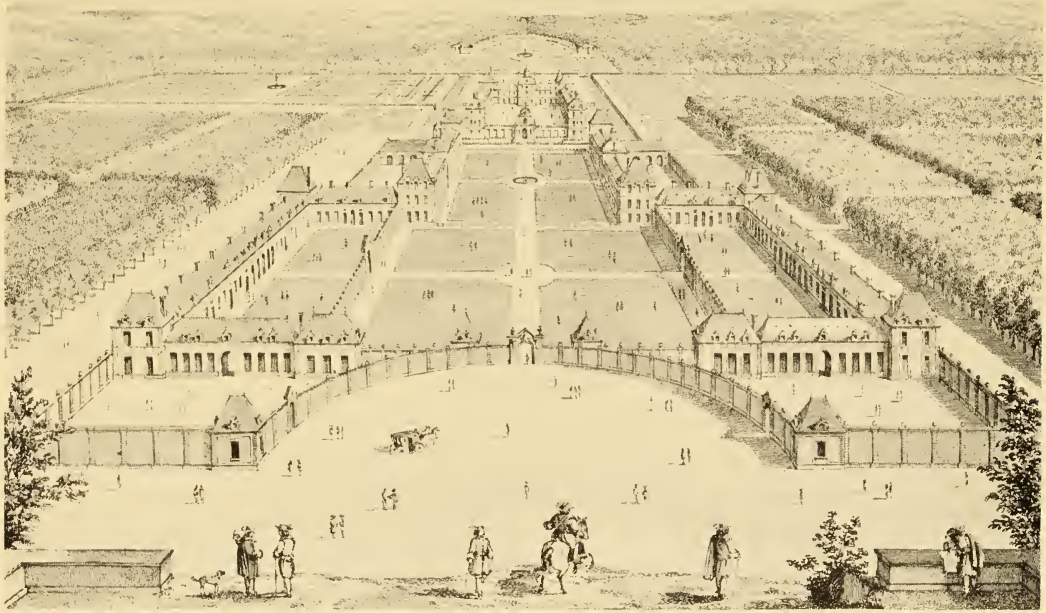
travelled many leagues from Paris to meet him, and received him in his arms; the courtiers crowded to congratulate him, weeping for joy! A few weeks later, the one disgraced and in prison, the other an exile from Court, M. de Châteauneuf and Madame de Chevreuse had time to reflect on their own foolishness and the amazing fortunes of Cardinal de Richelieu.

CHAPTER VIII

The Cardinal and his palaces—The château and town of Richelieu—The Palais-Cardinal—Richelieu's household, daily life, and friends—The Hôtel de Rambouillet—Mademoiselle de Gournay—Boisrobert and the first Academicians—Entertainments at the Palais-Cardinal—*Mirame.*

THE restless, ambitious energy and the passion for detail which made Cardinal de Richelieu the hardest worker of his time in politics, were thrown equally into his characteristic amusements. His love of building and furnishing splendidly carried him far beyond such pleasant country-houses as Rueil, Limours, or Bois-le-Vicomte, luxurious as they were. The Palais-Cardinal itself, in the heart of Paris and almost royal, had certain limitations, the architect being blamed for a lack of height and dignity. Le Mercier excused himself, we are told, by the Cardinal's own orders: he desired to give no cause for jealousy to the great ones of the kingdom who did not love him "because of the extreme hauteur with which he treated them, and to show moderation, even in the disposing of his palace, in the sight of those powerful persons who were envious of such prodigious credit and grandeur."

No scruples interfered in the lonely valley of the Mable, where for miles around the name of Richelieu now had no rival. Even Champigny, the once dreaded house of the Montpensiers, had come into the Cardinal's possession by a more or less forced exchange with Gaston d'Orléans, his little daughter's untrustworthy guardian. The fine old château was pulled down; its former outbuildings make the château of to-day; and the chapel, with its precious



CHÂTEAU DE RICHELIEU

FROM AN OLD PRINT

windows, its tombs and picturesque cloister, was only saved by the Pope's refusal to consent to its destruction. The Cardinal-Duc, though First Minister of France and head of her army and navy, could not flatly disobey the Church in a private matter.

There is more actually left of the old Montpensier buildings than of the magnificent palace, foreshadowing the splendour of Versailles, into which Cardinal de Richelieu transformed the river-fortress of his ancestors. Wide lawns, stiff alleys and avenues, still moats with water-lilies, one small pavilion looking sadly over the trees towards a high gateway where no one seems to enter; this is all that remains of the far-famed Château de Richelieu.

It was in the year 1625, soon after he came to power, that the Cardinal visited Richelieu with Madame de Combalet, and resolved on the transformation. After this the work went on for years, and was hardly finished when he died, though long before that the palace was the admiration of Europe, only surpassed in France by Fontainebleau. It was approached by an avenue a mile and a quarter long, ending in an immense *demi-lune* on which the first court opened by a stately gateway with flanking pavilions. This court led to a second; a bridge over the moat which, as in old days, surrounded the actual château, gave admittance to another gateway under a dome, guarded by a figure of Renown and other mythological statues. Within this was the *cour d'honneur*, a square of great buildings, with high pavilions at the four corners and in the centre opposite the gateway. Here was the grand staircase of variegated marble; and here, after the ruin of the House of Montmorency, stood the famous Slaves of Michel Angelo, brought from the Duke's Château of Ecouen. Statues and busts were everywhere.

The further front, beyond another bridge, looked upon square gardens "embroidered with flowers," where peacocks strutted, and through which flowed the imprisoned Mable in a broad canal full of fish. Beyond this again was another vast half-moon space of garden and parterre, with

statues, fountains, grottoes, an orangery, and a chapel; and all was surrounded by the great deer-park and the woods in ordered beauty, long alleys striking into them, lost in the shade.

The decoration, in and out, of this wonderful place shared the Cardinal's thoughts with the keenest interests of his political life; and the collection of works of art, for Richelieu and the Palais-Cardinal, meant in itself a large correspondence. Besides all this, he had undertaken to create a town outside the gates of his new palace, its main street to be of *hôtels* on one dignified plan, after the model of the Place Royale, built for themselves by his chief officers and the nobles whom he meant to attend his Court at Richelieu. That Court was never held, but the town rose out of the earth, "as if by enchantment," with all kinds of privileges and immunities granted by the King, and its symmetrical buildings have long survived their *raison d'être*, the château. There is indeed more life now in that seventeenth-century street than when La Fontaine wrote of its admired but monotonous rows of houses:

> "La plupart sont inhabités;
> Je ne vis personne en la rue;
> Il m'en déplaît; j'aime aux cités
> Un peu de bruit et de cohue."

The Cardinal's devoted friend, the Archbishop of Bordeaux, acted as surveyor of the works at Richelieu, and in a letter to him in June 1632, between the execution of Marillac and Monsieur's invasion of Languedoc, we have evidence of the way in which every exterior and interior detail was thought out by an unresting brain. The painting of the rooms was now in full swing, being mostly designed by Simon Vouet, the King's favourite painter, and carried out by him and other artists.

After giving orders as to the decoration of a large room above the entrance, the Cardinal proceeds:

"The vaulted cabinet at the side should be painted in *grisaille* on the stone vaulting, partly by the painter from Lyons, and partly by other painters, who will enrich the

grisaille with gold. M. de Bordeaux, being on the spot, will make them agree together as to what each shall do. In this cabinet there must be a wainscot six feet high with a recess to hold rarities, and the said wainscot shall be painted in *grisaille* of one tint and gilded to match the vaulting. M. Vouet can very well design the paintings."

Architectural details regarding the level of different rooms, their respective heights, their flat or vaulted ceilings, fill a good part of the letter. Everywhere there are six-foot wainscotings with shelves or recesses for "rarities"; for His Eminence's collection of *objets d'art* was already famous in Europe.

Then he goes on to the gardens.

"My uncle tells me that the canal at Richelieu is full of weeds. At the end of the summer, when the lawns are levelled and the masons are no longer working on the banks of the said canal, it must be entirely drained and all the weeds must be rooted up and burnt in its bed; and when it is clean and dry let it be filled again, and put a boat on it, and make a bargain with a strong and vigorous man who has nothing else to do, that he will not suffer a weed in it but will tear them up as they grow, which may be done with tools of iron made for the purpose. In that country it suffices a man if he have enough to live on, so that I think a hundred francs or forty crowns will acquit me."

With quite as eager an interest, both now and again later, even when Monsieur is "drawing towards Languedoc" and political storms are darkening all the horizon, he writes of pictures from Mantua that he is sending to Richelieu, of the preservation, with new floors and beams, of his father's old rooms—a fancy which, in Mademoiselle de Montpensier's opinion, spoiled the grandeur of the house—of building a park wall; and last, not least, of the new town and the houses that his friends are building there. A little hurry, he thinks, would not be out of place, for he is bent on making Richelieu, his own town, a centre of trade, of justice, of enlightenment, to all the western country.

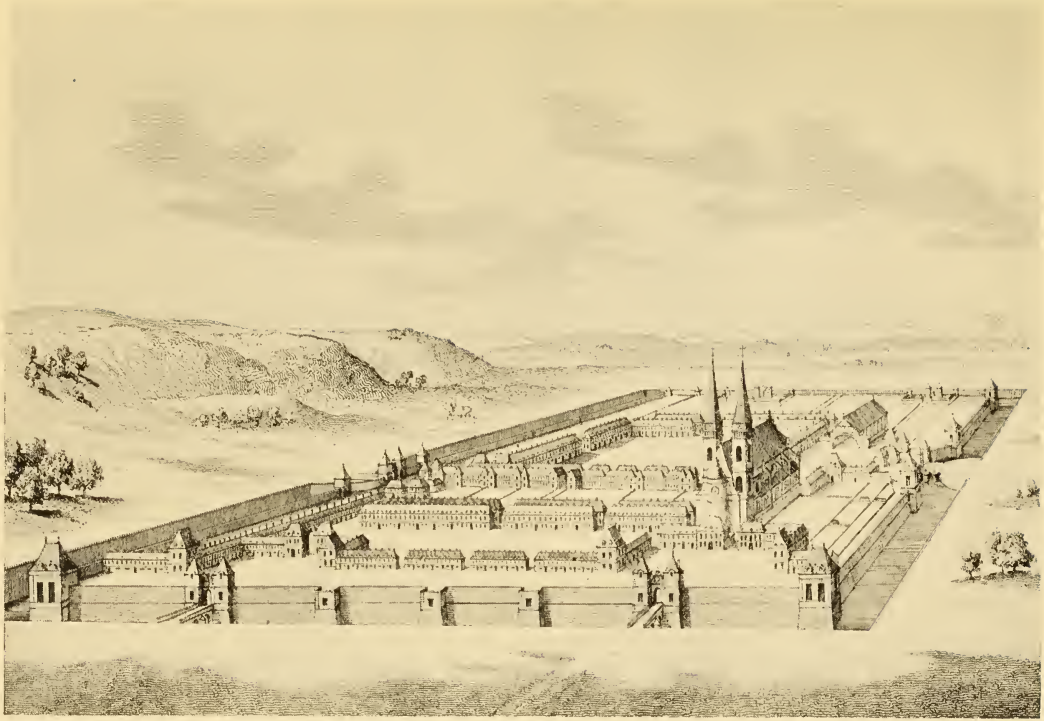
Though almost incredible, it appears to be a fact that the Cardinal died in 1642 without ever having visited his

new palace and little city of Richelieu. Various royal and distinguished guests, however, were entertained there in his lifetime by his niece or other representatives.

But Paris knew the Cardinal intimately well. His last eight years of life and work were chiefly spent at the Palais-Cardinal. From its completion, in the winter of 1633-4, he lived there in almost royal splendour. Though the exterior may have suffered from jealousy in high places, the apartments were far more gorgeous, more heavily luxurious, than those at Richelieu—which must have possessed, from descriptions, a kind of cool beauty and delicate grace suited to the tender lines and colouring of Poitou. At the Palais-Cardinal, the windows were glazed with "large squares of crystal mounted in silver." Rooms, halls, staircases, galleries, cabinets, were a blaze of colour; there were ceilings all gold, with allegorical pictures in mosaic, to the Cardinal's glory. The walls were hung with pictures by the greatest artists, French and Italian; there was a gallery of famous men, some of the portraits painted by Philippe de Champagne, others by Simon Vouet. The furniture throughout was magnificent, and the art treasures of every kind represented the work of collectors all over Europe. The gardens, in those early days, were charming in their formal beauty; lawns and clipped box hedges, a mosaic of flowers, long alleys of trees, and a high terrace with a famous iron-work balustrade which was destroyed in 1786 by the bad taste of the Duc de Chartres, then possessor of the palace.

The Cardinal's household was large, and devoted to him; whatever his character at Court and abroad, at home he was neither an ogre nor a sphinx, but a hard-working, autocratic, fiery, not ungenerous gentleman. His chaplains and almoners could bear witness to his widespread charity, ranging from the sick and poor in the streets of Paris to peasants ruined by war, and from colleges and hospitals to small forgotten convents which found themselves supplied, by his orders, with bread and meat they had no money to buy.

The Cardinal's household included at least five-and-



VILLE DE RICHELIEU

FROM AN OLD PRINT

twenty pages of noble birth, who received the same training in arms, horsemanship, mathematics, and dancing as if they had belonged to Royalty. A number of "gentlemen of condition" waited on him constantly and dined at his second table; the first was reserved for himself—when well enough to be there—and for his intimate friends, relations, and special guests. He had five hard-worked private secretaries, clerical and lay: the Prieur des Roches, Charpentier, Chéré, Mulot, Rossignol; his private physician, M. Citoys, often served him in the same way. Among his State secretaries and special agents, who directed, as we know, an army of spies at home and abroad, Père Joseph and his Capuchin clerks held the first place. "Ezéchiéli," as the Cardinal called him, had his offices in the palace, and visited His Eminence by day and by night.

The Bouthilliers, father and son, with M. de Noyers, were among his most confidential counsellors and fellow-workers; and in more private fashion Laffemas, head of the Paris police and known as "le bourreau du Cardinal," brought him the evil report of his enemies. In later years Mazarin became his trusted diplomatic agent and chosen successor. The Cardinal de la Valette, the Archbishop of Bordeaux, the Marquis de Brézé, the Marquis de la Meilleraye—these two being created by him Marshals of France—may be described as his aides-de-camp; and beyond all these buzzed a crowd of political pamphleteers and other writers in the Cardinal's pay; conspicuous among them Renaudot—founder under him of the *Gazette de France*, the first approach to a modern newspaper—Corneille the poet, and various members of the young Academy.

The Cardinal was fond of music, and his band of twelve instruments attended him everywhere. But what really made his train "august and majestic," says Aubery, was the strong force of guards always present for his defence. The King had added two hundred musketeers and a company of gendarmes to the hundred horse originally granted him, and these troops were quartered in and around his palace, being on duty by turns, as if attending on Royalty.

The officers of the guard were not always lucky enough to please His Eminence. This is a characteristic story:

"He had said one day to Saint-Georges, his captain of the guard, that he wished to walk after dinner in his gallery at the Palais-Cardinal and would see no one there; nevertheless, entering with M. de Noyers, he found two Capuchins. After giving them a favourable audience, and finishing his business with M. de Noyers, he scolded his captain of the guard for disobeying his orders, and treated him to hard words, telling him plainly that he would be obeyed, and that if he ever committed such a fault again, he would not come off so cheaply.

"The gentleman, furious at such disgrace, and believing that he could not remain in the service with honour, took leave to retire, without farewell, to some inn in the Rue St. Honoré. So that M. le Cardinal, seeing him no more, asked for news of him; and learning what had happened, begged the Commander de la Porte to go and find him and bring him back. But the Commander failing to do so, His Eminence charged M. de la Meilleraye to go in his turn, and to bring him back by any means in his power. Which at last he did, after trouble enough in persuading him. So that His Eminence, seeing him enter the room, went five or six steps to meet him, and embracing him with much kindness, said: 'Saint-Georges, we were both very hasty; but if you are like me, you will never think of it again. God forbid that my hastiness should ruin the fortunes of a gentleman such as you: on the contrary, I will do you all the good I can.'"

After which one does not wonder that the Cardinal's own people liked him.

His constant ill-health, with the weight of State affairs, made a regular life necessary to him. He went to bed at eleven, but after three or four hours of restless sleep he was generally to be found sitting up in his room, his worn face bent over portfolio or writing-table, his thin hand and active brain guiding the politics of Europe. Thus he would work from candlelight to dawn, writing and dictating, till fatigue obliged him to lie down and sleep again.

But he was up before eight and working with his secretaries; then, when dressed, he received the King's other Ministers; then heard mass, which he celebrated himself on great festivals; and then, before the mid-day dinner, gave audience in the garden to any one who wished to see him. After dinner he talked with his friends and guests till it was necessary to visit the King, to receive ambassadors and great men, to attend in public to important affairs of State. It was not till evening that he allowed himself any real quiet and recreation. Then we may see him strolling again in the garden, playing with his favourite cats, listening to music, laughing with the few familiars, such as the lively Abbé de Boisrobert, whose privilege it was to amuse him; and so, with private prayers that lasted half an hour, ended his days at the Palais-Cardinal.

He was always, of course, unpopular at Court and in society; not only because he was feared and mistrusted, but owing to an air of pedantry and affectation which was unpleasing to everybody and especially so to women; yet he particularly liked to make himself agreeable to them. When all the fables of his love-affairs are cleared away, this characteristic trait remains. He despised women, but he was ready to bid pretty high, sometimes, for their confidence and admiration. Several times, for instance, Madame de Chevreuse escaped with the punishment of temporary exile for plots and treasons which would have cost a man his head. The Cardinal would have been glad to stand high in her favour, as well as in that of her royal mistress. As their hatred grew with years, so did his hardness and severity, till the Duchess, leaving Queen Anne in danger and disgrace, fled finally to Spain.

His niece, with whom he was on the most intimate, affectionate terms, seems to have been the only woman who really cared for Cardinal de Richelieu. For her he planned various great marriages in France and Lorraine, all of which came to nothing. He gave her the Petit-Luxembourg when he moved to his new palace, but she still overlooked his housekeeping and was the leading figure in his entertainments. Society realized her power,

and treated her with considerable reverence, though it laughed behind her back and told many malicious stories. As a fact, Madame de Combalet—created Duchesse d'Aiguillon in 1638—filled a difficult position well; strengthening it by friendships with distinguished women such as the Princesse de Condé and Mademoiselle d'Angennes, the famous Julie of the poets, the star of her mother's salon at the Hôtel de Rambouillet.

The Marquis de Rambouillet has been already mentioned as a steady friend of Cardinal de Richelieu, and though His Eminence was not to be seen at Madame de Rambouillet's assemblies—the centre of civilising influence long before his noonday of power—he took a keen and partly sympathetic interest in all that went on there. His brilliant intelligence could not fail to recognise the great work done for society by "the divine Arthénice" in her blue drawing-room, where savage manners were softened and refined, military roughness was smoothed, coarse gossip discouraged; some touch of culture and literary taste being made a passport to the hostess's favour. It seems certain that political intrigue found no place at the Hôtel de Rambouillet; but it is characteristic of Richelieu's nervous, suspicious mind that he was not convinced of this. The long flirtation carried on by his friend the Cardinal de la Valette with the Princesse de Condé, both of them constant guests there, caused him some anxiety, and the story goes that he sent Père Joseph to Madame de Rambouillet with promises of advancement for her husband if she would keep him informed of the "intrigues" of these two. The Marquise replied: "I do not believe, Father, that Madame la Princesse and M. le Cardinal de la Valette have any intrigues; but if they have, I should not be the person to act as a spy!" It seems that Cardinal de la Valette, who was clever and witty, did indulge in the dangerous pleasure of laughing at Richelieu's pedantries, and with Madame de Rambouillet herself, "in whom he had entire confidence," and who enjoyed the joke.

Richelieu's keenness of intellect and political intuition were not matched by the delicate wit and lightness of

touch that are usually a Frenchman's birthright. He was rather fond of making jokes, but they were often heavy, if not grim, and better calculated to amuse himself than his hearers. Mademoiselle de Gournay had experience of this. She was a clever literary woman in a time when such women were rare. Montaigne adopted her as a daughter, and by his wish she published an edition of his works after his death, with a preface of her own. This was in 1595. At the height of Richelieu's fame she was an old and eccentric woman, living in Paris, known as the author of *L'Ombre*, a poetical work full of ancient and far-fetched words and high-flown sentiments. The fashionable young poets and literary men of Paris found pleasure in teasing and ridiculing Mademoiselle de Gournay.

In 1635 she edited a new edition of Montaigne, which she dedicated to Cardinal de Richelieu. She was invited to an audience at the Palais-Cardinal. Richelieu paid her the necessary compliments, but in obsolete words which he had carefully chosen out of *L'Ombre*. He was highly pleased with himself, and his attendants were choking with laughter. But Mademoiselle de Gournay was an aristocrat. Not for nothing was she *bien demoiselle*, as Tallemant says. "Elle avoit vu le beau monde."

"'You are laughing at the poor old woman,' she said. 'Laugh, great genius, laugh: it is right that every one should contribute to your diversion.'"

The Eminentissime was ashamed of himself, and asked her pardon. Afterwards he pensioned her handsomely, and not only her, but her old servant Mademoiselle Jamyn and her favourite cat Piaillon, not forgetting Piaillon's kittens. The Abbé de Boisrobert, Mademoiselle de Gournay's good friend, brought these claims irresistibly before a lover of cats.

At the height of favour as jester, verse-maker and confidential gossip, Boisrobert was a fount of honours and pensions at the Palais-Cardinal. Poor poets and other literary men were the special objects of his care. He was a clever busybody who went everywhere and knew every

one of the scribblers in verse and prose, social, political, theological, classical, dramatic, or of more trifling kind, who had drifted up mostly from the provinces into Parisian garrets and hung about the hôtels of the great, depending on patronage for their daily bread. It was among these scattered units of varied birth and talent, all belonging to "the republic of letters," that the French Academy began to exist, and Boisrobert has the right to be called one of its founders.

His character of favourite and of universal patron, as well as his literary skill, admitted him to weekly meetings of a few chosen spirits in the Marais, at the house of Valentin Conrart, *bourgeois*, Protestant, and man of letters. Boisrobert's position at the Palais-Cardinal made it natural that he should carry the report of these meetings direct to Richelieu. The Minister was not altogether pleased. He disliked private assemblies; too often, in his experience, they meant conspiracy, and he would gladly have made them illegal.

The arguments of Boisrobert, if they did not quite reassure the Cardinal, suggested to him a means of utilising these literary meetings to the advantage of the State and of the French language. He proposed to Conrart and his friends, through Boisrobert, that they should become a public body with letters-patent, bound by its own statutes and holding its assemblies under royal authority, with the object of purifying and regularising the language and literature of France. The men of letters struggled a little, for liberty was sweet. But they soon submitted, and the Forty Immortals took their place among those French institutions which have survived the old world in which they were born.

As long as Richelieu lived the Academy worked under his presiding authority. He encouraged no frivolity, no discussion of trifles, but insisted on hard, steady work. The great Dictionary, first planned by the poet Chapelain, was seriously begun in 1634 and carried on by the most methodical among the new academicians, some of whom were considerably laughed at by the free literary world

outside. They were, in fact, slaves to a Minister who, besides having an unfounded faith in his own taste, was a critic swayed by reasons extra-literary: one need hardly mention that the Academy, under Richelieu, snubbed Corneille and condemned *Le Cid*, too Spanish and too independent to please His Eminence.

The slavery was profitable: places and pensions made life liveable for the wiser academicians of Richelieu's day—whose survivors were described by La Bruyère as "vieux corbeaux," croaking as their master had taught them. And they grew to love their chains, while pouring flattery at the great man's feet. Guillaume Colletet, more drunkard than poet, composed a *rondeau* which was presented by Boisrobert to the Cardinal:

"Au grand Armand je vous invite à boire!
Trinquer pour lui, c'est œuvre méritoire.
C'est le support du Parnasse françois;
C'est l'Appollon qui verse quelquefois
Ses rayons d'or jusque dans nostre armoire.

Si sa vertu veut qu'on chante sa gloire,
Sa santé veut qu'on en fasse mémoire
Et que l'on crie, à table, à haute voix:
Au grand Armand!

N'y boire pas, c'est avoir l'âme noire.
Donc, pour blanchir la nostre comme yvoire,
Roys des esprits, beuvez comme des Roys!
Bacchus viendra couronner vos exploits
Et Boisrobert en contera l'histoire
Au grand Armand!"

It is to the honour of Pierre Corneille that he did not, till many years later, find a place among these "roys des esprits." The Cardinal had been disappointed in him. Before the Academy existed he was one of five poetical secretaries who were employed by His Eminence to arrange his own original ideas in poetry and drama. The other four were Boisrobert, l'Estoile, Colletet, and Rotrou. It seems that Corneille was too honest for his place; his criticism too frank and his opinion too positive. He was soon dismissed, the Cardinal finding that he lacked "esprit

de suite"; which may be translated as the gift of following blindly wherever his patron chose to lead.

Richelieu had a passion for plays and ballets, and employed a troup of actors of his own. They were the third company in Paris, the others belonging to the Théâtre des Marais and the Hôtel de Bourgogne. There were two theatres at the Palais-Cardinal, and the smaller was generally used for the comedies, dances, and other entertainments constantly attended by their Majesties and the Court. Here were performed pieces arranged by the Cardinal's own authors: *Les Tuileries* and *L'Aveugle de Smyrne*, dull comedies magnificently staged; livelier pieces such as *Clorise*, by Baro, a very popular play-writer; other fashionable plays; ballets in which young Royalties danced —Mademoiselle, Gaston's daughter, Mademoiselle de Bourbon, Mademoiselle de Longueville, Mademoiselle de Vendôme, the Duc d'Enghien; his future wife Mademoiselle de Maillé-Brézé, and other nieces and cousins of the Cardinal. These gay fantastic ballets, even more than regular plays, were the delight of society, young and old. All the courtiers and great ladies joined in them; Louis XIII. himself often composed both the words and the music of lutes, spinets, violins, and forgot his gloomy stiffness in dancing.

In the intervals of the performances the Cardinal's guests enjoyed rare fruits and dainty sweetmeats, handed round by his pages in baskets tied with English ribbons of gold and silver tissue. When comedy and dance were over the company was offered a gorgeous supper on the great service of plate which the Cardinal left to the King.

The entertainments at the Palais-Cardinal reached their zenith in January 1641, with the representation of *Mirame*. Richelieu, to quote a contemporary, "témoigna des tendresses de père pour cette pièce"; and it seems actually to have been in great part his work, in collaboration with the academician Desmarets. The larger of his two theatres, holding three thousand persons, was used for the first time and decorated with special magnificence. It was rather a vast saloon than a theatre, with gilded

galleries for the most distinguished guests; the ordinary admiring crowd finding place on the floor. His Eminence, happy and triumphant, was near the Queen: the Abbé de Marolles, once a timid student, now a critical spectator, describes him as dressed in a long mantle of flame-coloured taffeta over a black soutane, with collar and facings of ermine.

The scenery of the play, with the new machinery which astonished all eyes, had been ordered from Italy by Cardinal Mazarin, now a familiar figure in Paris and Richelieu's right hand. There was a long perspective of palaces and gardens, with terraces, grottos, fountains, statues, all looking out over the sea, "with agitations," says the *Gazette*, "which seemed natural to the waves of that vast element, and two large fleets, one appearing two leagues distant, both of which passed in sight of the spectators."

Over this lovely scene night gradually fell, and all was lit up by the moon. Then, just as naturally, day dawned and the sun rose, taking his turn in this "agréable tromperie."

The majority of the guests were amazed and transported beyond measure. A few critics, among whom was the Abbé de Marolles, did not particularly care for all this "fine machinery and grand perspective." He found it fatiguing to the eyes and the mind: in his opinion a comedy should depend for success on story, poetry, and fine acting. "Le reste n'est qu'un embarras inutile."

There were other more malicious critics who saw in the story of the play—the love of Princess Mirame, daughter of the King of Bithynia, for the daring sailor Arimant, commanding the fleet of Colchos, with all the tragical events which at last brought about a happy ending—a veiled allusion to the old romance of Queen Anne and the Duke of Buckingham. It is very improbable, to say the least, that Richelieu, who had at this time ceased to persecute the Queen, should choose to offend her afresh by stirring up grievances fifteen years old. His object, never indeed attained, was to live at peace among princes and

nobles who had learnt their lesson. What really annoyed him in connection with this performance of *Mirame* was the discovery by his watchful enemies of various disreputable persons among the invited guests. The King was displeased; Monsieur enjoyed the incident; and the Cardinal could only revenge himself on an unlucky official who had been too free with his cards of admittance.

In spite of fault-finders *Mirame* was a triumph. Standing up in his place, the Cardinal joyfully acknowledged the constant thunders of applause, then waving his hand for silence, that none of his fine lines might be missed. When the play was over, and the Queen had passed on a golden bridge drawn by peacocks to a silver throne prepared for her beyond the lifted curtain of the stage, to preside over a grand ball that ended the evening, there was no prouder man in Europe than her host—the weary, sickly statesman who had already given provinces to France and made her paramount in Italy and Spain.

CHAPTER IX

1633—1637

Conquests in Lorraine—The return of Monsieur—The fate of Puylaurens—France involved in the Thirty Years' War—Last adventures of the Duc de Rohan—Defeat, invasion, and panic—The turn of the tide—Narrow escape of the Cardinal—The flight of the Princes.

FROM the year 1630, Richelieu had employed historians and antiquaries in hunting up documents to justify his plans for the greater glory of France. Amazing were the pretensions that these learned persons encouraged him to make for his King. According to them, Louis XIII. might claim sovereign rights over England, Spain, Milan, Naples, and Sicily, not to mention Flanders, Artois, Franche-Comté, Lorraine, and other frontier provinces. How far Richelieu's dreams of conquest really extended, it is difficult to say. But the year 1633 found him resolved at least, in his own words, to "re-establish the monarchy in its original greatness" by asserting "the ancient rights of the Crown"; and Duke Charles of Lorraine soon gave him his desired opportunity of annexing a large part of the old Austrasian province.

Relying on imperial support and on his sister's marriage with the heir-presumptive of France, the Duke had broken treaties and had neglected to pay homage for his French fief, the duchy of Bar. In the summer of 1633 the Parliament of Paris was directed by Richelieu to declare that duchy confiscated to France. In August a French army, led by the King and the Cardinal, marched once more upon the frontier of Lorraine.

The Duke tried to gain time, hoping for the help of

a Spanish army under the Duke of Feria, which was advancing from Italy. He sent his brother, Cardinal Nicolas-François, to negotiate with the French, offering not only to consent to the dissolution of his sister's marriage, but that the Cardinal, who had taken only minor orders, should ally himself with Richelieu by marrying Madame de Combalet. This proposal was coolly put aside by Richelieu, who observed that he had not advised the King to enter Lorraine with a powerful army for his private family ends. He insisted that Nancy, the capital, with Princess Marguerite in person, should be placed in the King's hands as a pledge of submission.

As to his sister, Duke Charles was willing enough, being painfully aware that the alliance with Gaston was a mistake which might ruin him; but he would not consent to surrender his capital, protesting, with oaths, that he would rather burn it down. Nevertheless, the city did not stand a long siege; but when Louis XIII. and Richelieu made their entry, their promised captive had escaped. By the help of her brother the Cardinal, and with great spirit and courage on her own part, Madame Marguerite had slipped out of Nancy at the beginning of the blockade, and in a page's disguise had joined her husband at Brussels. There she was formally received as Duchess of Orléans by the Queen-mother and the Infanta, and the marriage was confirmed by the Archbishop of Malines.

Richelieu was not altogether displeased. Well convinced of his power to separate Monsieur from his new wife as soon as the Prince himself should return to France and his duty, he was not sorry to have an honourable excuse for going to extremes with the Duke of Lorraine. No hostage, no capital. Duke Charles was helpless; his sister was no longer in his hands; his Spanish allies, checked on their way by a Protestant army, failed to come to his aid. He had to see a parliament established in Metz and almost the whole of his province garrisoned by French troops. When the King returned to Paris the lilies of France were flying over Lorraine. Town after town submitted, fortress

after fortress. In January 1634 Charles abdicated for the time in favour of his brother the Cardinal, and with the small remains of his army took service under the Emperor.

Then Cardinal de Richelieu bent all his energies to forcing on Gaston's return to France and reconciliation with his brother. He regarded this as a necessity of State, and he was equally resolved that the Queen-mother, who had made some overtures on her own account, should never again set foot in France. Both Marie and Gaston, while quarrelling between themselves, played the Minister's game by their own foolishness. A murderer, caught at Metz, was suspected with reason of being sent from Brussels by Chanteloube, Marie's unwise counsellor, to attempt the life of Richelieu: he lost his own. The same fate befell others, in Lorraine and elsewhere, charged with the same designs; and while this secret campaign went on, Gaston and his favourite Puylaurens made an independent treaty with Spain, promising to invade France with a foreign army to be supplied by the Imperial generals in the Low Countries.

Well served by spies, Richelieu knew all this. He replied to Monsieur's treason by representing to the King that such a prince, who could promise French fortresses to the enemy, was not fit to wear the crown; and with a bold decision before which, at such a crisis, not even the hereditary monarchy was sacred, he proposed a league of nobles and princes of the blood who should pledge themselves, in case of Louis' death, against the unconditional succession of his brother. France after all, in the eyes of Richelieu, was greater than her kings.

By the autumn of 1634 Puylaurens and his master knew that they had made a huge mistake in allying themselves with Spain. No troops were forthcoming, and it began to be evident that the prospect was not one of triumph and revenge, but of ruin and perpetual exile. All through September M. de Puylaurens was negotiating secretly with Cardinal de Richelieu, promising for Monsieur, among other things, the renunciation of his marriage, and also making a good bargain for himself.

Gaston left Brussels one day in October, and galloped hard to the frontier. He had been an exile for two years, and was enchanted to see France again. His little daughter, Mademoiselle, now seven years old, met him at Limours, and flew joyfully into the arms of a gay and fascinating father.

As to Madame, left behind in Flanders, her marriage was solemnly declared null and void by an assembly of French clergy, as having been contracted against the civil law. In this decision, however, the clergy acted on Gallican lines, independently of the Pope, who was of a different opinion; and although, after long resistance, Monsieur formally submitted, he had protected himself in advance by a letter to Urban VIII. refusing to be bound by any extorted promise. The consequence was, that Richelieu's apparent triumph in this affair of the Lorraine marriage only lasted his life. Gaston and Marguerite remained faithful to each other; and the stiff Madame who reigned in after years at Blois and at the Luxembourg was the same Princess, the heroine, in her adventurous girlhood, of a secret marriage and a romantic escape.

It was that private letter of Gaston's to the Pope which brought about the ruin of the unlucky Puylaurens. He had gained high favour with Richelieu, who had purchased his faithful service, as he thought, by making him a duke and a peer of France and by marrying him to his own first cousin, Mademoiselle Philippe de Pontchâteau, younger daughter of his aunt, Louise du Plessis, his father's sister. The marriage took place in Paris at the end of November 1634, and on the same day the Duc de la Valette, son of the Duc d'Épernon and widower of Henry IV.'s daughter, Mademoiselle de Verneuil, was married to the elder sister, Marie de Pontchâteau, and the Comte, afterwards Maréchal, de Guiche to another cousin, Mademoiselle du Plessis de Chivray. The Cardinal celebrated the triple wedding by a magnificent fête. At this time the first nobles in France found it politic to quarrel for the honour of his alliance, and it was matter of general talk in society that he meant to marry Monsieur to Madame de Combalet, the Lorraine

marriage being set aside. This report even reached the ears of Monsieur's little daughter, and filled her with just indignation.

A few weeks after the wedding the Cardinal's spies brought him not only the secret, well kept by Puylaurens, of Monsieur's letter to Rome, but proofs of a fresh treasonable correspondence carried on by the new Duke with Spain. Swiftly fell Richelieu's vengeance. Puylaurens, with several of his friends, was arrested at the Louvre on February 14, and carried off by royal order to Vincennes. The entreaties of Monsieur, newly reconciled at Court, delayed his trial, but he died after four months of prison. "His good fortune," says Richelieu, "withdrew him from this world, and saved him from the infamy of a shameful death, which he could not have escaped."

Whether the fatal atmosphere of the dungeons of Vincennes was assisted by poison of a more active kind, will never be known. That suspicion hung about the deaths of many of the Cardinal's prisoners. Richelieu consoled the young widow of Puylaurens by marrying her to the Comte d'Harcourt, of the House of Lorraine, younger brother of the Duc d'Elbeuf, a queer personage, but a fine soldier. He had fought a successful duel with Bouteville, in itself a distinction. He proved himself worthy of the Cardinal's favour by serving His Eminence faithfully for the rest of his life.

But for Richelieu, the Thirty Years' War might have ended with the death of Wallenstein and the imperial victories which followed it. Even the Protestant princes of Germany were ready for a compromise with the Emperor. But Richelieu had no intention of accepting a general peace which would leave his Swedish friends weak and dissatisfied, his own conquests incomplete, Spain and Austria easily predominant in Italy and the Low Countries. He resolved that France, as an ally of Sweden, Holland, and the German Protestants, should now take an active part in the war, and he prepared for the actual declaration by a treaty with the Dutch for the partition of the Spanish Netherlands, to be followed by one with the Dukes of Savoy,

Parma, and Mantua, for the conquest and division of the Milanese.

In May 1635, after some military provocation on the part of Spain, Louis XIII. sent his herald-at-arms to Brussels—a noble Gascon, Jean Gratiollet, Captain of Abbeville—and solemnly declared war against his brother-in-law, Philip IV., while publicly inviting the Low Countries to rebel against Spain. "Europe was amazed," says a modern French writer, "to see Richelieu suddenly take up arms for those same Huguenots whom he had crushed with such good will at La Rochelle."

Europe was amazed: and what of the French nation, flung unconsulted into the struggle with Catholic Europe which might easily have become a fight for its own existence? The three Estates of the realm had each its own separate point of view. The princes and nobles loved war; but the majority, Catholic and hating Richelieu, were rebels at heart. However, each man had his orders: content or malcontent, each governor found himself dispatched to his own province, each commander to his post, while generals dashed hither and thither in pursuit of armies which had to be hired, recruited, disciplined, poured in half-a-dozen directions over the frontier—Germany, Flanders, Lorraine, Switzerland, Italy. Richelieu, the directing brain, at this moment of high energy, moved the members even against their will.

To most of the clergy, again, the war was of the nature of sacrilege; and still more so, later on, the demand of an enormous payment of arrears for lands held under the Crown, which had been suffered to go free for nearly a hundred years. But at a time when the taxes of France had rolled up to more than a hundred million francs a year, a gigantic and as yet unheard-of sum, Richelieu could no longer grant the clergy the privilege of paying no tax but their prayers, which he had himself claimed for them at the States-General of 1613.

"The people give their goods, the nobles their blood, the clergy their prayers." As ever, the patience of the most heavily taxed seemed almost inexhaustible; and it was not

till France was deeply engaged in the war, her middle class and her peasantry crushed by Richelieu's intendants and financiers under burdens every week more enormous, that in the south and the north populations made some effort to save themselves; made it by rioting, their only resource, and found themselves—*Croquants* in Guienne, *Va-nu-pieds* in Normandy—in a last state worse than the first.

In spite of all these discontents there were ways in which Frenchmen now realized the national unity which was Richelieu's dream. The famous leader, Duke Henry de Rohan, was again in arms, not now as a Huguenot chief, but commanding an army against the Duke of Lorraine, fighting for his duchy with imperial troops behind him. In the spring of 1635, it was to Rohan that Richelieu committed the task of preparing for his designs on Milan by a new occupation of the Valtelline, thus once more playing the old game of blocking the chief military road between Austria and Spain. All went well at first, the Duke proving himself a loyal subject and a good general. The cause that finally discomfited him and drove him at last to throw up his command and to retire to Geneva was the failure of Richelieu's government to pay a promised indemnity to the Grisons, rightful possessors of the valley, who after two years' French occupation, secretly encouraged by Spain, rebelled suddenly against Rohan and insisted on the evacuation of their territory. Blamed by Richelieu for a failure which was no fault of his, and broken by severe illness, the Huguenot hero was still ready to bear arms for France. In the spring of 1638 he volunteered to serve under Duke Bernard of Saxe-Weimar —the great soldier who, if actually fighting for his own hand, nevertheless gave Alsace to France—and died of his wounds after the siege of Rheinfeld, having lived long enough to know with what swift brilliance Bernard had turned defeat into victory.

For many months, as readers of history know, the fortune of war went against Richelieu. The ravages of the French and the Dutch armies in the Netherlands, under the Prince of Orange and the Marshals de Châtillon and

de Brézé, did not incline the population to change masters. In Germany, one town after another fell into imperialist hands, and it was only with difficulty that the French held their own in Lorraine. The invasion of the Milanese failed; and later on the deaths of the Dukes of Savoy and of Mantua deprived France of two important allies.

The French fleet, though making a fine show for those days—forty-seven men-of-war—wasted its strength in vainly flourishing about the coast; and owing to the quarrels of its commanders, the Comte d'Harcourt and the Archbishop of Bordeaux, with M. de Vitry, governor of Provence—the slayer of Concini—did not for a long time succeed in even recovering the Isles of Lérins, seized by Spain at the opening of the war.

And then, in July 1636, a terrible disaster threatened France. Imperial troops crossed the frontier, and had taken two strong places in Picardy, La Capelle and Le Catelet, before the French commanders were ready to oppose them. Imperial cavalry crossed the Somme and advanced to the Oise, the Comte de Soissons retreating before them, and spread a very natural terror throughout the country. They were mostly Croats and Hungarians, fierce and savage men, whose road was marked by robbery, fire, and slaughter. Their leader was the Bavarian, John of Werth, a name of fear in the campaigns of his day.

Paris was in a state of terror and fury. The black shadows of the streets, in the sweltering heat of late July and early August, were loud with raging men and women, whose voices taught the Cardinal-Duc his unpopularity. Paris was ill fortified, ill defended, and part of her strong old walls had been destroyed by him for the sake of his Palais-Cardinal. They cried against him because of that; because of his ingratitude to the Queen-mother, his failure, so far, in the war he had undertaken, his alliance with heretics. And Richelieu knew that their fear, if not their hatred, was too well justified. The Comte de Soissons, whose army, camping in the forests and holding the fords of the Oise, protected Paris, was not above suspicion as to his loyalty; the Duc de Chaulnes, governor of Picardy,

was lazy and negligent; money and men were lacking for the defence of a divided, discontented, panic-stricken country.

The first news of the invasion found the King and the Cardinal absent from Paris as usual in the heat of summer. They returned at once to the stifling, frantic city.

Then "the great Armand" showed the stuff he was made of. "Remember, I pray you," he wrote to the Comte de Soissons, "on such occasions as these, moments are worth years." Paris being always and before all things a Catholic city, he appealed to her religion. All the bishops in the kingdom were commanded to hold processions within and without their cathedrals, with the special devotions of the Forty Hours. From every church in Paris and in the whole of France, with every chapel of convent or monastery, the bells clanged out, calling the faithful to pray for their country. In his own person, the Cardinal vowed to the Paris convent of the Filles du Calvaire, in the Marais, Père Joseph's favourite foundation, a large sum of money and a silver lamp to burn perpetually before Our Lady's altar.

Whatever his own personal faith may have been, he knew the spiritual needs of the people. That he did not fear their angry voices he proved by driving alone, "at a foot's pace, without suite and without guards," through the wild crowds in the streets, from the Palais-Cardinal to the Hôtel de Ville, bearing the royal order that the city trades and companies should assemble for the purpose of giving their help to the King. His courage triumphed. The people, says Montglat, "dared not say a word to him."

Royal decrees followed thick and fast; their succession was like the sending round of the Fiery Cross, summoning men to serve their country. Those Parisians who had planned to escape John of Werth and his pillaging horde by flying with all their movable goods to Orléans or some other city of the west, found the gates of Paris shut against them. All privileges and exemptions were abolished in the city. All men capable of bearing arms were ordered to

present themselves for enrolment, either at the Hôtel de Ville, where the old Maréchal de la Force sat on the steps to receive them, or mounted and armed at Saint-Denis. All the workshops of Paris were closed; all building stopped; no master of a trade, excepting bakers, butchers, armourers, gun-makers, saddlers, and the like, might keep more than one apprentice; the rest, with masons, stone-cutters, carpenters, artisans of every sort, must serve the King. From each owner of a coach, a horse was demanded; and every house in Paris was expected to furnish a man with belt and sword. The peasants of the surrounding villages were set to work on new fortifications at Saint-Denis.

A day sufficed to change terror into enthusiasm. On August 5 representatives of all the trade guilds and syndicates were received by Louis XIII. in the great gallery of the Louvre, "and offered him their persons and their goods with so great gaiety and affection, that most of them embraced and kissed his knees." Louis rose to the occasion and kissed them all, not excepting the chief of the cobblers, whose guild made the noble gift of 5,000 francs. The Parliament—not without grudging conditions—the municipality, the colleges, monasteries, and other bodies, poured money at the King's feet: there was enough to pay and keep, for three months at least, twelve thousand foot and three thousand horse.

In the meanwhile, the news that the enemy had taken Corbie on the Somme, thus drawing alarmingly near to Amiens, on the direct road to Paris, fanned the flame so fiercely that "tout le jeune bourgeois," says Montglat, "à toute force, vouloit aller à la guerre." Not many days later, the King and the Cardinal advanced to Amiens, and a strong army, commanded by Monsieur and the Comte de Soissons, held the enemy in effectual check along the banks of the Somme. By the middle of September, all the actual danger of invasion was past, though the Imperialists still held Corbie. John of Werth and his merry men, loaded with booty, had galloped back across the frontier of Artois.

Corbie was not retaken till November, but the Cardinal

Infant, his aunt's successor as ruler of the Netherlands, with the other Spanish and Imperialist generals, discouraged by the advance of the French army, had already withdrawn from French territory; and it seemed, as the autumn advanced, as if the fortune of war was changing in Richelieu's favour. The enemy was repulsed everywhere: in Burgundy, by Weimar, Condé, and the Cardinal de la Valette; on the Spanish frontier, where St. Jean de Luz was taken, but further advance was resisted by the old Duc d'Épernon and the Comte de Grammont, governors of Guyenne and of Béarn; on the Morbihan coast, where a Spanish force, disembarking near Vannes, attacked the Abbey of Prières. The sturdy monks defended themselves so gallantly that the country-side had time to rise against the invaders, who fled back in disorder to their ships.

At this moment of danger, the two young men whom Richelieu had called to the command of the King's armies were busily plotting his destruction. To them and their like the death of the Minister and the anarchy that must follow were not only desirable for their own ends, but the best medicines for the ills of France.

Monsieur and the Comte de Soissons were seldom friends, except when they joined hands against Richelieu, and it happened that at this time each was nursing special grievances: Monsieur, as to his forbidden marriage and the death of Puylaurens; Soissons, because the Cardinal had dared to offer him his niece in marriage, had refused him the command of the army in Alsace, and more recently had shown distrust by setting Monsieur over him as Commander-in-Chief of the army on the Oise. There were not wanting faithful friends who pointed out to both princes that now was the moment to revenge themselves. The army was theirs; the Cardinal was at Amiens; the King, staying at the Château de Demuin, a few miles away, rode constantly into the city to hold council with his Ministers. It was natural that the princes in command of the army should attend the council. The rest was easily thought out, with the help of M. de Montrésor, a follower of Monsieur, M. de Saint-Ibal, in M. le Comte's confidence,

and two "solid men," Varicarville and Bardouville. These six conspirators fixed a day on which the Cardinal should be stabbed to death after the King had left the council.

All went well for their purpose. On the appointed day, "the council being ended, the King went away with all his guards, and the Cardinal remained alone in the courtyard with Monsieur and the Comte de Soissons. Immediately," writes the Marquis de Montglat, "Varicarville, who knew the secret, stationed himself behind the Cardinal, expecting the signal which Monsieur was to give, while Saint-Ibal and Bardouville took their stand, one on the right, the other on the left. But instead of commanding that the projected deed should be done, Monsieur, seized with fear, remounted the staircase without a word; while Montrésor, surprised at the change, followed him, telling him that his enemy was in his power, and that he had only to speak."

It was not the first time that Richelieu had owed his life to Gaston's temperament. So *éperdu* was the Prince, so utterly had his nerve failed him, that he could only mutter something about "another time," and escaped as quickly as possible, leaving the Comte de Soissons, "dans la dernière confusion," face to face with Richelieu. Unaware of his danger, and the King's brother having disappeared, the Cardinal bade his other enemy farewell and retired to his lodging. The fingers of Saint-Ibal, Varicarville, Bardouville, relaxed on their dagger-hilts, and one may imagine that these three gentlemen stared rather blankly on each other as their doomed victim walked away.

When the story became known, which was not immediately, many persons blamed the Comte de Soissons that he had not made up for Monsieur's weakness by finishing the affair. "He excused himself," says Montglat, "by the respect he owed Monsieur, so that he dared undertake nothing in his presence without his command." He was too wise to act alone in such a matter: the position of Gaston's cat's-paw, to be disclaimed and forsaken and left to the King's justice, was not attractive. The army might rally round the heir to the throne in sudden rebellion; the Comte de Soissons was not equally secure.

Three days later there was another chance, for Richelieu visited the camp; but he was attended by his own guards, and the assassination was "judged impossible." On this occasion a whisper of the plot reached his ears, and with his usual fearlessness he spoke of it to the Comte de Soissons, haughtily reprimanding him.

The princes were frightened, for their plots had gone beyond the death of Richelieu. They had disloyally done their best to delay the relief of Corbie; they had attempted to draw the Duc d'Épernon into the project of a rising, already favoured by the Duc de Bouillon and others, the object of which was to lay hold on the government, to reinstate the Queen-mother, and to make peace with Spain. They failed; the various successes of the autumn were against them; the Duc d'Épernon, though two of his sons were on their side, refused to listen to them. After the re-taking of Corbie, having returned from the army to Paris, they were seized with a great fear of the Cardinal. He was certain to know all; he was of a temper that never forgave; the Court, they felt assured, was not a safe place for them. They took counsel with each other and resolved to fly, at once, on a dark November night, while Paris was singing and rejoicing over the good news of victory.

Both princes, before leaving Paris, paid a separate visit to the Tuileries. There, under the care of M. de Montglat's mother, Madame de Saint-Georges, lived Mademoiselle de Montpensier, Gaston's daughter, now nine years old, a person of decided character, and one of Richelieu's most hearty haters. The Comte de Soissons paid great court to this little lady, the richest heiress in France if not in Europe. Though four years older than her father and twenty-three years older than herself, and having failed ten years earlier to run away with her mother, he proposed to marry her, and Gaston was ready to consent. This plan was one of the links that now united them. Mademoiselle herself liked Monsieur le Comte, and accepted his compliments and sugar-plums with satisfaction: but at this time she did not understand his object.

It is doubtful if the royal consent would ever have been given to this marriage. But a curious little passage in the Cardinal's own *Memoirs* shows how keenly he noticed every detail in the lives of the princes, and on what slight if sure grounds he accused them of conspiracy.

"The next day at evening, which was the night of the 19th to the 20th, Monsieur and he (M. le Comte) left Paris; and that it was plotted between them is shown by this: Monsieur having arrived in Paris, and visiting Mademoiselle his daughter, Madame de Saint-Georges told him that M. le Comte had but just gone out. He leaned his head against a chimney-piece, remained long thoughtful, then said, and repeated several times, 'What! Monsieur le Comte is here? What! He has not gone to Champagne!' Which showed plainly that there was a plot between them."

Disguised and almost alone, the princes retired in different directions: Monsieur to his castle of Blois, the Comte de Soissons to neutral ground at Sedan, held by its sovereigns of the House of Bouillon for more than a hundred years. From these retreats they sent their demands and remonstrances to Louis XIII., while on the other hand they corresponded with the Queen-mother and with Spain.

Richelieu seems to have treated the discontents of the Comte de Soissons with some scorn. He allowed negotiations with him to drag on for some months, and then advised the King not only to forgive him, but to allow him to remain four years at Sedan unless he chose to return to the Court: a leniency for which the Cardinal has been blamed; dangerous to the State and fatal to Soissons himself.

As to Monsieur, a mixture of threats and entreaties, the advance of royal troops to Orléans, the clever management of M. de Chavigny, the Cardinal's most trusted agent, soon brought about a change in his weathercock mind. He met the King at Orléans in February 1637, "with many demonstrations of friendship." Indeed, "dissimulation went so far, that there appeared to be a sincere reconciliation between Monsieur and the Cardinal."

CHAPTER X

1637—1639

Palace intrigues—Mademoiselle de Hautefort—Mademoiselle de la Fayette—The affair of the Val-de-Grâce—The birth of the Dauphin—The death of Père Joseph—Difficulties in the Church.

IN Richelieu's own mind his worst enemies were to be found among his nearest neighbours. "Les intrigues de cabinet," says M. de Montglat, "donnèrent plus de peine au Cardinal de Richelieu que toute la guerre étrangère." Not only mischievous great ladies like the Duchesse de Chevreuse, but every man or woman who had anything to do with the Court, were objects of his watchful suspicion, and to most of them, while they begged his favour and flocked to his entertainments, he seemed the cruel ogre, the mysterious sphinx, so long represented in history.

He never really trusted the King. Louis was fond of gossip, easily amused by small things, and often attracted by persons undesirable from Richelieu's point of view. And even at his height of power he found it impossible to carry out the ideal arrangement which would have hindered any one not bound to his own service from approaching the King at times such as the *petit coucher*, when intimate talk was allowed, and men might even dare to tell a story against the Eminentissime himself. They would probably repent; for though Louis might laugh and enjoy such jokes, he had a way of repeating them to the Cardinal, if only with a half-childish notion of teasing him. The consequences to a chattering courtier might be serious.

The influence of these gentlemen with the King was seldom really dangerous, and yet the Cardinal was justified in his distrust, for the majority hated him, and he went about always with his life in his hand, not because of ambitious princes alone. Men's consciences were no protection to him. For instance, the Abbé de Retz, afterwards Cardinal and Coadjutor of the Archbishop of Paris, felt little doubt that he would have done a right action, socially and politically, had he carried out a plan for killing Richelieu in the chapel of the Tuileries, at the long-deferred christening of Mademoiselle de Montpensier.

Over and over again Richelieu tried to confine the King's special favour to persons chosen by himself, and over and over again he failed. It was not so much that people played him false, as that he found them—men and women—too proud, too independent, and too faithful to their order for the place he meant them to fill—that of the King's favourites and his own spies. There was Mademoiselle de Hautefort, with whom Louis fell in love when she was a beautiful girl of fifteen, brought to Court from her native province by her grandmother, Madame de la Flotte, and appointed one of the Queen-mother's maids-of-honour. After the "Day of Dupes," when Marie de Médicis left France and her household was broken up, Madame de la Flotte became lady-in-waiting to the young Queen in the place of Madame du Fargis, whom Richelieu sent into exile; and Mademoiselle de Hautefort, transferred at the same time, was specially recommended by Louis to his wife's favour.

At first, very naturally, Queen Anne was not pleased. Marie de Hautefort was in every way a dazzling person. Madame de Motteville declares that she made a greater effect at Court than any other beauty. "Her eyes were blue, large, and full of fire; her teeth white and even; her complexion had the white and red suitable to a fair beauty." Added to this, she had a sharp tongue; she was high-spirited, "railleuse," and by no means soft-hearted.

Louis XIII.'s love-affairs contrast curiously with those of his father. Nothing could be more innocent, more purely

platonic, than his devotion to Mademoiselle de Hautefort. He hardly dared approach her; his talk was of dogs and of birds; and yet he showed the stormy jealousy and the sulks and humours of a passionate lover, and spent hours in writing songs and music for his lady. She disputed with him freely and laughed at him unmercifully.

At the beginning Richelieu encouraged this singular affection. But after about three years he saw reason to change his mind. Mademoiselle de Hautefort was not inclined to act as his political agent, and she had soon given the loyalty of a warm and generous nature to her mistress, the Queen, whom she saw neglected by Louis and subject to the tyranny of the Cardinal. This is to say that the woman most admired by the King had joined the Spanish party at Court and was rightly counted by Richelieu among his enemies.

It cost him little trouble to drive Mademoiselle de Hautefort out of favour—at least for a time. When Louis had become slightly tired of his quarrels with the fair beauty and slightly chilled by her friendship with the Queen, it was made easy for him to find consolation in the dark eyes of Louise de la Fayette, a cousin of Père Joseph, whose family was supposed to be devoted to the Cardinal.

Mademoiselle de la Fayette was as good and gentle as she was lovely; in the varied records of the French Court there exists no sweeter figure. During two years she and the eccentric King adored each other with a tender affection and mutual confidence quite absent from the Hautefort affair; yet this, like the other, never passed the bounds of friendship. It went so far, however, that the girl's conscience was alarmed, and she began to think of taking refuge in a convent.

The idea was not unwelcome to Cardinal de Richelieu. The Court was full of his spies, who warned him that Mademoiselle de la Fayette's intimate talk with the King was not to his advantage; that she was inspired by Père Caussin, the royal confessor, to speak to Louis in favour of his mother, his wife, his brother, and all the other

victims of a warlike, heretical policy; that she was encouraged by her uncle the Bishop of Limoges and her brother the Chevalier de la Fayette, to set him against the Cardinal; that the Bishop had even been heard to say, "When the Cardinal is ruined, we will do this and that. As for me, I shall inhabit the Hôtel de Richelieu."

The Court was buzzing with intrigues all through 1636, the "year of Corbie," while the King still enjoyed, as far as possible, the society of the only woman who had ever loved him for his own sake. Mademoiselle de la Fayette, torn between conscience and affection, was dragged one way and the other by two sets of advisers, each headed by a dignified ecclesiastic moved by reasons beyond mere anxiety for her welfare and that of the King. The Père Carré, Superior of the Dominicans in Paris and a favourite director of Court ladies, was one of Richelieu's chief spies and most devoted servants. Mademoiselle de la Fayette came to him for counsel. He encouraged her scruples and blessed her vocation: "Il faisait parler Dieu," says M. Cousin, "selon l'intérêt et au commandement de Richelieu."

On the other hand Père Caussin, a Jesuit, and apparently an honest man, took advantage of his place as the King's confessor to advise Mademoiselle de la Fayette to remain at Court. He saw no reason why Louis should be deprived of a perfectly innocent friendship for the sake of foolish scruples and a half-imaginary vocation. Such an opinion, if disinterested, would have been worthy of all respect; but at the French Court, divided between Richelieu's spies and Richelieu's enemies, this was almost impossible. The reasons that had moved Cardinal de Bérulle and the brothers Marillac, the grievances of the Queen-mother, of the Pope and of the princes, all found voice in Père Caussin. He was closely allied, too, with another distinguished Jesuit, Père Monot, the confessor of Christine, Duchess of Savoy, who was at this very time in Paris working against Richelieu in the interests of Spain. Considering all this, it is no great wonder that Père Caussin presently found himself disgraced and banished to Brit-

tany, a harmless Jesuit of eighty years old being appointed royal confessor in his place. It seems that Richelieu did not wish to break the tradition which gave the care of the King's conscience to that Order.

Tired of intrigue, pushed on by Père Carré and her own doubts, Louise de la Fayette entered the Convent of the Visitation in the Rue Saint-Antoine, in May 1637. For some months the King continued to visit her there, until Richelieu, whose influence had been a good deal shaken by her arguments, had regained his personal power, and Mademoiselle de Hautefort, still at Court, her old dominion.

The tragi-comedy known as "the Affair of the Val-de-Grâce," which played itself out in the summer of 1637, proved that Richelieu's star was still in the ascendant. The war with Spain had added fresh distress to Queen Anne's position, so long a false and lonely one. The secret sympathy of half the Court and of all the malcontents in the kingdom did not compensate the Queen for the loss of her friends, exiled one by one as Richelieu came to suspect them, or for the entire separation from her own family and its allies in Austria, the Netherlands, and Lorraine. The Queen did not easily resign herself. In spite of *espionnage*, she wrote and sent letters to her brothers, the King of Spain and the Cardinal-Infant, as well as to Madame de Chevreuse, living in banishment at Tours. These letters were written in a refuge to which spies did not penetrate: the Benedictine Abbey of the Val-de-Grâce in the Faubourg St. Jacques. The Abbess, of Spanish origin, was a devoted servant of the Queen.

It is no insult to Richelieu's patriotism to believe that he had never pounced on smaller game with equal satisfaction. The famous letters themselves, if we may believe Madame de Motteville, contained no actual treason against the King or the State; but they did contain "railleries" against the Cardinal, and in any case they were written to the enemies of France, and belonged to the political opposition so long irreconcilable, which he crushed more sternly every year he lived. We may think what we

please about his more personal motives of spite and revenge: that he had made love to the Queen and that she had laughed at him seemed to the gossips of the time a sufficient explanation of everything. The Cardinal, they said, wished to send her back to Spain, to divorce her from the King, to marry him to Madame de Combalet! In the following year that much-talked-of lady was consoled for the loss of so many great matches by being created Duchesse d'Aiguillon in her own right. Her uncle paid an enormous sum of money for the title and the estates belonging to it.

The Queen's troubles in the summer of 1637 began with the intercepting, by Richelieu's people, of a letter in cypher which she had written to Madame de Chevreuse. The bearer, La Porte, her valet-de-chambre, was the person to whom she trusted all her secret correspondence. Suddenly thrown into the Bastille, examined first by Richelieu's terrible agents and then by the Cardinal himself, threatened with torture and death, the faithful man refused to say one word that could incriminate his royal mistress. Even the Cardinal admired his fidelity.

It was in August, and the Court was at Chantilly. The Queen in her alarm first denied everything, solemnly and on oath; then thought it prudent to make some kind of confession. She sent for the Cardinal, who came accompanied by his two chief secretaries, M. de Chavigny and M. de Noyers. Madame de Sénecé, the mistress of her household, was in attendance on the Queen.

The Cardinal, according to himself, was respectful, fatherly, but severe. When the Queen began to assure him of the harmlessness of her letters, he said at once that he did not believe her, but promised her his own faithful service and the King's forgiveness if she would confess everything. On this, Anne sent the witnesses out of the room and remained alone with Richelieu. We have only his word for what passed: that the Queen, speaking "with much displeasure and confusion," confessed to a correspondence with Spain and with Flanders, carried on by secret means and in terms which might justly displease

ANNE OF AUSTRIA, CONSORT OF LOUIS XIII

FROM A MINIATURE AT SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM

the King; that she exclaimed several times, "Quelle bonté faut-il que vous ayez, Monsieur le Cardinal!"; that she protested her eternal gratitude, saying, "Give me your hand," while holding out her own, famous for its beauty; which the Cardinal respectfully refused to touch.

He made her write and sign her confession, and then caused the King to bestow a formal forgiveness, not sweetened by a list of requirements as to her future conduct. She was to visit no convents and to write no letters without the King's permission, her maids and her ladies-in-waiting, especially "Fillandre, première femme de chambre," who had charge of her writing-desk, being set as spies and gaolers over her. Not much wonder that the lively little niece, Mademoiselle de Montpensier, visiting Chantilly in that disturbed month of August, found the Queen in bed, ill with fear and worry.

For this was not the end of it. The Cardinal was dissatisfied, still suspecting concealment. La Porte in his prison was once more threatened with torture. A spy was sent to him—one of the Queen's officers, gained over by Richelieu and Laffemas. He brought a supposed message from the Queen to La Porte, commanding him to tell all he knew. But if Anne's enemies were clever and resourceful, so also were her friends. The romantic courage of Mademoiselle de Hautefort and of the Chevalier de Jars, himself confined in the Bastille, had found a way of conveying a letter to La Porte, warning him of the extent of the Queen's confessions. He was thus prepared to tell the same story—all of which seems to justify Richelieu's suspicion.

Madame de Motteville says that the remembrance of those summer weeks at Chantilly "faisoit horreur à la Reine." She was within an ace of following her mother-in-law's example in a flight from France. Mademoiselle de Hautefort and the Prince de Marcillac—afterwards Duc de la Rochefoucauld—were ready to ride off with her to Brussels. Her life at the Court had become unendurable. Richelieu brought forward the terrors of the law in the person of Chancellor Séguier, who not only examined the Queen "like a criminal," but made a thorough search at

the Abbey of the Val-de-Grâce, where her letters and papers were supposed to be hidden. Either because the Abbess was fearless and loyal, or because there was nothing to find, the Chancellor found no papers of a later date than 1630.

So the storm passed over. Richelieu could prove nothing; the King and Queen were reconciled; and the only consequence was a fresh exile for Madame de Chevreuse, who rode for her life from Tours and crossed the Pyrenees into Spain.

Mademoiselle de Hautefort remained in favour for two more years; the Queen valued her friendship, and the King, after his final parting with Mademoiselle de la Fayette, had returned to his old love; she became a lady-in-waiting, with the title of *Madame* and other privileges. But Richelieu was still afraid of her. Rather cautiously and slowly, from 1637 till the end of 1639, he was working for her ruin. In the Queen's very household he had a spy, long unsuspected and exceedingly clever at her odious trade, Mademoiselle de Chémerault, a young maid-of-honour, an intimate friend of Madame de Hautefort. From the most private interior of the Court, this girl reported every word and deed to a Madame Maline, who conveyed the information direct to Richelieu in letters which still exist, a mine of ancient gossip written in the curious jargon used by him in his secret notes. Everybody has a nickname: the Cardinal himself, in these notes, is sometimes *Amadeo*, sometimes *l'Oracle*; the King and Queen are *Céphale* and *Procris*; Madame de Hautefort is *l'Aurore*, Madame d'Aiguillon *Vénus*, Mademoiselle de la Fayette, *la Délaissée*, Mademoiselle de Chémerault herself, *le bon Ange*. These letters warned the Cardinal of all the loves and hatreds, the private and public discontents and desires, which moved the Queen and her friends, and kept him in touch with every detail of the stormy yet affectionate intercourse between Madame de Hautefort and the King. Her empire, if only intermittent, was dangerous; the more so, because she was known to be on friendly terms with the Comte de Soissons and with Monsieur.

Richelieu believed in "the expulsive power of a new

affection." Young Henry d'Effiat, Marquis de Cinq-Mars, was brought to Court by him with the definite object of distracting the King from the society of Madame de Hautefort. This plan being on the way to succeed, the Cardinal took advantage of one of the King's journeys, when the lady was not there to plead her own cause, to accuse her of being as dangerous an *intrigante* as Madame de Chevreuse, adding that he could no longer endure this fighting in the dark, and that Louis must choose between Madame de Hautefort and himself. With some show of regret, the King yielded. Madame de Hautefort was banished from Court, and retired to her grandmother's country estates. Four years later, when Richelieu and Louis XIII. were dead, she was recalled and honoured among the old friends who had been faithful to the Regent in adversity.

The Queen's own troubles and humiliations came to an end in September 1638. On the 5th—Richelieu's birthday and also the date on which he became Cardinal, Duke, and Peer—the long-wished-for Dauphin was born at Saint-Germain. All France rejoiced; the towns, especially Paris, held high festival, with singing of *Te Deum*, firing of cannon, ringing of bells, keeping open house for all comers. The Cardinal, who was in Picardy, wrote rapturous letters to the King and Queen.

"I hope and believe that God has given Monseigneur le Dauphin to Christendom to appease its troubles, and to bring to it the blessing of peace. I vow to him, from his birth, the same passionate devotion I have always had for the King and for your Majesty, whose faithful servant I am and shall be eternally. . . ."

The Cardinal's rejoicing was sincere. In the birth of the future Louis XIV. he rightly saw the triumph of his own policy as well as the saving of France from the danger, which the King's weak health made imminent, of falling into the hands of Gaston d'Orléans and his crew. Two years later, in 1640, the birth of Philippe was an additional security.

But the joy of September 1638 was soon followed by one of the most real sorrows of Richelieu's life. In

December he lost Père Joseph, his adviser and shadow, the intimate friend of thirty years. Through all difficulties and changes the two men had worked together. Both were hard and pitiless politicians, driving at the same ends in Church and State. François du Tremblay, the monk, was the more imaginative, the more enthusiastic, and the less human of the two. He was not, like Richelieu, personally ambitious, and he lived the simple life of a friar, while his keen cleverness and ready, fearless resource made him the first of diplomatists. If he was eager for the Cardinal's Hat steadily refused by Pope Urban VIII., it was because of the advantages this honour would have brought to his beloved Capuchin Order.

Père Joseph had been ill for some time at his convent in Paris when the Cardinal wrote to beg him to come to Rueil, offering to send his own litter that he might travel comfortably. This offer he accepted. Richelieu received him with much affection, and at first he seemed to rally: he dictated a circular letter to his congregation of the Filles du Calvaire, answered letters from missionaries in the East, and listened with pleasure to a book describing the exploits of Godefory de Bouillon in the Holy Land; the spirit of a crusader was in him to the last. Another seizure brought him very near death, but he lingered till December 18, while Richelieu tried to cheer his "Ezéchiéli's" failing ears with news of the victories by which France was now reaping the fruit of so much effort and suffering.

With great funeral pomp the Capuchin was borne back to Paris and buried in his convent church in the Rue St. Honoré, where for nearly a hundred and seventy years his stately Latin epitaph, composed by Cardinal de Richelieu, told the world how he had lived in the midst of splendour and riches, austere and poor. His bones lay beside those of the famous Père Ange, Duc de Joyeuse and Marshal of France. In 1804, when the already profaned church was pulled down and the Rue Mont-Thabor built over its site, their remains were removed to the cemetery of Montmartre.

Paris of the streets made her own epitaph for Père Joseph :

"Cy gît au chœur de cette Eglise
Sa petite Eminence grise,
Et quand au Seigneur il plaira
Son Eminence rouge y gira."

The Cardinal's Hat desired by Richelieu for his old friend was eventually given to Jules Mazarin, the clever Italian statesman who, originally an agent of the Vatican but now naturalised in France, had risen so high in Richelieu's opinion that he appointed him in Père Joseph's place one of his principal Secretaries of State.

Mazarin was in fact a peacemaker between Richelieu and the Pope, and his promotion to be Cardinal was really a sign of their reconciliation. The Church of France had been supported by Rome in resistance to the new laws and revived taxes and the many complicated exactions made upon her great possessions in aid of the war. The cry of sacrilege rose high; the archbishops and bishops were divided, the majority eager to resist a Minister whom they called "tyrant," "apostate," and other hard names, the minority ready to hail Cardinal de Richelieu as "the Head of the Gallican Church." There was actually a talk of appointing him Patriarch. Why not? said the Jesuits, wisely respectful of the civil power. Books and violent pamphlets were written on both sides of the question.

The Pope refused to issue bulls for the appointment of French bishops so long as the French Government held on its present course. Richelieu was prepared to do without them. The King refused to receive the Nuncio, or to recognize his authority. The Pope absolutely refused to confirm Richelieu's own election as Abbot-General of the Orders of Cîteaux and Prémontré, or to countenance his project of advanced reform in his own Order of Cluny. A private quarrel in Rome made matters worse; one of the French Ambassador's gentlemen was killed, and the ambassador's wrath irritated the Pope into forbidding any funeral honours to be paid in Rome to Richelieu's lieutenant, the soldier-Cardinal de la Valette,

who died at Rivoli in the midst of his Savoyard campaign of 1639.

The quarrel was at last made up: for the French Church, as for the government, it was really a question of money, and both agreed to a compromise. Richelieu's Finance Secretaries withdrew some part of their immense demands; the clergy, very unwillingly, granted the rest; Urban VIII. was appeased, and Mazarin became a Cardinal.

If Richelieu opposed the Pope, the friend of the Hapsburgs, and asserted the liberty of the Gallican Church in such matters, for instance, as the annulling of Monsieur's marriage, he was neither unorthodox, nor unfriendly to different forms of religious effort. The great charities of the seventeenth century grew and flourished under his shadow. The spirit of St. François de Sales lived on in the Order of the Visitation, devoted to the sick and the poor. Vincent de Paul, with his Mission of Lazarist Fathers and his Sisters of Charity, bringing light into dark places and helping the miserable, both in Paris and in the deserts of the country, was a familiar and beautiful figure through most of Richelieu's reign. Monsieur Vincent's great Mission work, the training of the younger clergy, also nobly carried on by the congregations of the Oratory, of St. Nicolas du Chardonnet and of Saint-Sulpice, had lain very near Richelieu's own heart in his young days.

The Cardinal extended his powerful protection to the teaching Orders, Jesuits, Ursulines, and others; and the reformed Benedictines of Saint-Maur, so famous for ecclesiastical and historical learning, owed their distinction largely to him. He did very much, indeed, towards the reform and discipline of the regular clergy, and with a longer life he might have removed many of the abuses which spoiled their religious ideal. But his chief and immediate object was to nationalize the Orders, and to bring them under the same authority with France as a whole.

"A central and supreme authority"; absolutism; obedi-

ence: these were the root-principles of Richelieu's rule. He hated original, independent thought or action, in Church or State; it was of the nature of rebellion. Personal quite as much as political, this imperious, dominating temper was the chief secret of his triumph in matters where reason and equity have in the long run decided against him; for instance, the many cases in which he appointed his own judges and tribunals to try his prisoners, the slower and often fairer proceedings of the parliamentary law-courts being found unbearable by his impatient and positive mind.

The same dominating spirit explains Richelieu's treatment of his old friend the Abbé de Saint-Cyran. He could be tolerant of Protestants: their private heresies mattered little, as long as their public conduct was loyal. But the advance of Jansenist opinions within the French Church was another thing. In the case of M. de Saint-Cyran, as strong-willed a personage as the Cardinal himself, it meant a very powerful spiritual influence not quite strictly orthodox, with a stiff morality and an independence of mind which judged and condemned much of the Cardinal's own theory and practice. He did his best to win Saint-Cyran, whose learning and high character were of European fame. But bishoprics would not tempt the man who did not choose to range himself among the Cardinal's slaves, who, though none too loyal to the Pope, declared openly that the Church could not annul Monsieur's marriage, and who agreed with Jansenius in denouncing the alliance of France with heretics.

The great director and glory of Port-Royal was imprisoned at Vincennes in 1638, and remained there till after the death of Richelieu. The Eminentissime could not afford to tolerate a man the watchwords of whose spirit were independence, boldness, and truth. "He is more dangerous," he said, "than half a dozen armies."

CHAPTER XI

1639—1642

Victories abroad—The death of the Comte de Soissons—Social triumphs —Marriage of the Duc d'Enghien—The revolt against the taxes—The conspiracy of Cinq-Mars—The Cardinal's dangerous illness—He makes his will—The ruin of his enemies—His return to Paris.

FOR the last three or four years of Cardinal de Richelieu's life his figure stands out against a horizon glowing with the fires of victory.

After the death of Bernard of Saxe-Weimar in 1639, Richelieu's diplomacy transferred his army and his lieutenants to Louis XIII.'s service, and the conquest of Alsace for France was the consequence. The Comte de Guébriant, the brilliant soldier who succeeded Weimar in the command, carried the war into Germany, and by a series of victories, in conjunction with the Swedes, "made the Emperor tremble in Ratisbon."

In the Spanish Netherlands, the Maréchal de la Meilleraye took Arras after a two months' siege, and gave back to France the ancient province of Artois. In northern Italy the campaign was more troublesome. The princes of Savoy, the new Duke being a child, disputed the regency with their sister-in-law Christine of France, and allied themselves with Spain. Christine herself, influenced by Père Monot, had leanings towards the imperial side, and it was not till the Spaniards had swept over Piedmont and taken Turin and besieged Casale that she brought herself to turn for help to Richelieu. Even then, jealous for her son's independence and her own, she would not consent to

send him to France for education, much less to hand over his whole dominions to be occupied by her brother's armies. Her obstinacy triumphed, for Richelieu withdrew his conditions and sent the Comte d'Harcourt to relieve Casale and retake Turin; operations which were brilliantly carried out. The Spaniards were driven out of the country; the Savoyard princes, finding the fortunes of war against them, submitted to the Duchess-regent, who returned victorious to her capital. France gained, besides a firm alliance with Savoy, a paramount position in North Italy.

Spain was in trouble by land and by sea. Her fleets were defeated and half destroyed by the French in the Mediterranean and the Bay of Biscay, and by the Dutch, Richelieu's allies, in the English Channel. The old province of Catalonia, with the frontier counties of Roussillon and Cerdagne, revolted against the burdens heaped on them by Olivarez and offered their allegiance to the King of France. French armies overran Roussillon, besieged Perpignan, and driving on over the mountains, fought side by side with the rebels in Catalonia. Before the death of Richelieu almost all the province was in French hands, and his brother-in-law, the Marquis de Brézé, had reigned for some months as Viceroy at Barcelona. It looked as though the south-eastern frontier of France would be extended, as in the days of Charlemagne, to the Ebro. The power of Spain was furthered handicapped by the revolt of Portugal. Encouraged by France, she claimed and seized her independence, recalled her old royal family of Braganza to the throne, and added one more to the active allies of Richelieu.

The tragic end of the Comte de Soissons was a more personal triumph for the Cardinal. Monsieur le Comte had spent his time at Sedan in weaving plots with the Duc de Bouillon and the wild Archbishop of Rheims, now Duc de Guise, while waiting for some turn of events that might restore his fortunes. In the summer of 1641 Richelieu decided to break up this nest of conspirators. He required the Duc de Bouillon to withdraw his hospitality, and ordered the Comte de Soissons to banish himself to

Venice. Both refused. It was now open war between them and Richelieu. They tried, but failed, to draw Gaston d'Orléans into their quarrel; for once he was prudent in time. They published a manifesto, as usual declaring themselves loyal subjects of Louis XIII., moved solely by a patriotic desire to get rid of the tyrant Minister. "Pour le Roy, contre le Cardinal," was the device on their banners.

They prepared to invade France with a small army of imperial troops, supported by Duke Charles of Lorraine, who was now prepared to break his last treaty with Richelieu. They were met by a royal army commanded by the brave but lethargic Coligny, Maréchal de Châtillon. He was rather seriously beaten by the rebels in the first and only engagement of the little campaign. But this news, which cost Richelieu a few hours of great wrath and anxiety, was followed immediately by other news which made it of no importance: "the bitter and the sweet," His Eminence wrote to M. Bouthillier—"the sweet" being the death of Soissons, who was shot by an unknown hand in the confusion of that victorious skirmish through the woods of La Marfée, on the left bank of the Meuse.

Richelieu had a right to rejoice, for one of his trusted spies wrote to him: "If M. le Comte had not been killed, he would have been welcomed by the half of Paris . . . so says every one . . . and that all France would have joined him, because of the *sol au livre* and the other vexations laid upon the people, who are very malcontent."

The revolt died with Soissons, for neither Bouillon nor Guise bore a name to be followed far. Bouillon submitted and was pardoned; Guise fled to Brussels, and did not return till the days of the "bonne Régence." The Cardinal persuaded Louis—with difficulty, they say—not to wreak his vengeance on the Prince's dead body, but to restore him to his mother. Some time afterwards His Eminence paid a visit of condolence to Madame la Comtesse. "Elle étoit sur son lict, et ne respondit aux complimens que par ses larmes."

The death of Louis de Bourbon freed Richelieu not only from a political and personal enemy, but from one of the proudest of the princes who scorned the lofty social claims of himself and his family. These reached their highest point in 1641. His uncle, Amador de la Porte, was Grand Prior of France, and enjoyed several rich governments. His pious and eccentric brother, Alphonse, was Archbishop of Lyons, Primate of Gaul, and Cardinal. Richelieu could not make a statesman of this worthy ecclesiastic, but those who failed to treat him with the honour due to a great prince of the Church found themselves in disgrace. The Cardinal's first cousin, Charles de la Porte, Marquis de la Meilleraye, was a Marshal of France, Grand Master of the Artillery with his residence at the Arsenal, and a Knight of the Order. One of the Cardinal's favourite commanders, he distinguished himself in many campaigns, and, though a good man in the main, was said to have enriched himself from the public finances. He afterwards succeeded Richelieu as Governor of Brittany.

The Cardinal did his best to pour honours on the families of his two sisters, Françoise and Nicole. Madame de Combalet, now Duchesse d'Aiguillon and all-powerful with her uncle, had one brother, François de Vignerot, Marquis du Pont-de-Courlay, who ruined himself in spite of splendid appointments and earned terrible scoldings from the Cardinal, who paid his debts and as far as possible disinherited him. It was his eldest son, Armand Jean, born in 1629, whom the Cardinal adopted as heir to his name, arms, and titles, and the greater part of his possessions. This boy took the name of Du Plessis, and succeeded to the duchy, peerage, and estates of Richelieu. The title of Marquis de Richelieu passed to the younger brother, Jean Baptiste Amador de Vignerot, and his descendants succeeded in time to the duchy of Aiguillon, left by Madame d'Aiguillon to her niece, her brother's only daughter, Mademoiselle d'Agénois.

The Marquis de Maillé-Brézé, whose unhappy wife died in 1635, accepted enormous benefits from his brother-in-

law without much show of thanks. In Richelieu's last years he held some of the highest military commands in the kingdom, and was too clever and capable not to acquit himself well, though with airs of ennui and fits of temper. His children did not inherit his intelligence. His son, Armand Jean, Duc de Fronsac, failed to distinguish himself in the navy; his daughter, Claire Clémence, a dull little girl with a touch of the heroic, hardly seemed equal to her fate—that of linking the family of Richelieu with the blood royal of France.

The brilliant matches made by the Cardinal's cousins, Mesdemoiselles de Pontchâteau and others, had already proved that, as Montglat says, "the greatest were happy and honoured to be allied with him." Among these "greatest" was the first prince of the blood, the Prince de Condé. He had been Richelieu's faithful and rather servile follower ever since their reconciliation in 1626, being shrewd enough to see that this was the path to wealth and power. So early as 1633, when Mademoiselle de Brézé was only five years old, he had proposed a marriage between her and his son Louis, Duc d'Enghien, and the Cardinal had accepted the offer. In 1641 the marriage was celebrated in Paris with great magnificence. The bridegroom was sulky and unwilling: already, at twenty, he was a fighting hero, a man of the world, and desperately in love with Mademoiselle du Vigean. To him his childish little wife was profoundly uninteresting. But the match gave keen pleasure to Cardinal de Richelieu; and the Prince de Condé proved his satisfaction by offering to marry his daughter, Mademoiselle de Bourbon (the famous Duchesse de Longueville), to young Armand de Maillé-Brézé. The Cardinal replied, according to Mademoiselle de Montpensier, with dignity and good sense: "Qu'il vouloit bien donner des demoiselles à des princes, et non pas des gentilhommes à des princesses."

But there was the other side of the shield. There were dark shadows behind the victories and social triumphs which lifted France and her great Minister so high in Europe. During Richelieu's last years his armies

PORTE DE CHÂTELLERAULT: RICHELIEU

were sometimes forced to other work than that of fighting Imperialists. The provincial government of France had become, in many quarters, little but a hard and extortionate system of tax-collecting, and the richest districts naturally fared the worst. When Bullion, Bouthillier's colleague in the management of the finances, wrote despairingly in the autumn of 1639 to Chavigny, "Nous sommes maintenant au fond du pot," and added his fear that foreign war might bring about civil war, the great fertile province of Normandy, ruined by injustice, tyranny, and enormous taxation, was actually in open rebellion; the "Va-nu-pieds" were marching in bands over the country, murdering tax-gatherers, destroying Government property, while even the tradespeople of Rouen and Caen rose and burned the houses and *bureaux* of the royal officers and killed them and their servants in the streets.

Richelieu wrote very sharply to his financiers on their mismanagement and ill-judged severity. As to the Normandy affair, they must remedy that "by prudence and skill," as best they could: no troops could be spared to help them. However, His Eminence had to yield to necessity, and Colonel de Gassion, with 6,000 men, marched into Normandy, occupied Caen and Rouen, put hundreds of peasants to the sword, hanged or sent to the galleys hundreds more, while those who escaped fled the country. The whole population was disarmed; the Norman Parliament ceased for the time to exist, and the province had to pay a heavy indemnity besides all the arrears of the taxes it had refused, which were reimposed in the fullest rigour. The towns were deprived of all their liberties and privileges, their municipal courts being suspended; for two years Normandy was governed by a Royal Commission, and lay in deep disgrace under a kind of martial law. All this was an example—extreme, certainly—of Richelieu's domestic government, the wrong side of his glory.

The Norman revolt worried him terribly; the more so as he knew that it was instigated by his enemies;

not Spain alone, but England, hindered by internal troubles from taking an open part in the war. Richelieu had indeed earned little gratitude from Charles I. His creation of a navy, his colonising and trading policy, had for years made France a dangerous rival to England in home and foreign seas, and of late his far-seeing statesmanship, by encouraging the rebel party in Scotland, had helped to bias the King in favour of his mother-in-law's quarrel. Marie de Médicis was an honoured guest at the English Court for nearly three years, from 1638 to 1641.

This old friend and enemy of the Cardinal did not survive him. She died, poor and miserable, at Cologne, in the summer of 1642: her children reigning in all Christendom, she had not an inch of earth to call her own. The Cardinal, lying ill at Tarascon, caused a solemn service to be held in her memory.

Another deepening shadow on his last years was the state of his health. In addition to the old ills of frequent fever and headache, he now suffered from painful and distressing complaints which kept him constantly in the hands of physician or surgeon; and the consequences were much depression, irritability, and suspiciousness, with increased hardness and severity to those who offended him, so that great and small feared him more than ever and loved him less. In this condition of mind and body he entered on the year 1642, during which he was to encounter his last conspiracy, to suffer his last doubts of the King's trust and favour, and triumphantly to end his career.

Already, in the autumn and winter of 1641, there was mortal enmity between Richelieu and the young favourite he had given to Louis XIII. The success of Cinq-Mars was complete: the King could not pass a day without him; he was Grand Equerry, cut a splendid figure at Court, was popular and gay, made love to great ladies, dreamed of marrying Princess Marie de Gonzague and climbing to the highest rank in the kingdom. If the friendship of the King had stormy episodes which might

have warned a less vain and confident courtier against putting his trust in princes, there were also times when Louis was ready to listen with grim enjoyment and even with sympathy to the young man's rash talk against the Cardinal. Richelieu had not found in Cinq-Mars the tool he expected, and revenged himself sharply by word and deed. He treated "M. le Grand" with scornful anger as an impertinent boy, laughed at his social ambitions and barred his access to the royal Council.

Cinq-Mars swore vengeance; his talk was of "poniards and pistols." He had been a secret ally of the Sedan conspirators; now, with a few confederates, among whom were his intimate friends M. de Fontrailles and M. de Thou, he began seriously to plot the destruction of the Cardinal. The first idea was simply assassination; but the dangers were obvious, and François de Thou had a troublesome conscience. They widened their plan into a political conspiracy, including Monsieur, the lately pardoned Duc de Bouillon, and the Spanish government. De Thou shrank also from high treason, but he was not the man to betray his friends; he had been injured in his career by Richelieu, and also, private reasons apart, regarded him as "the oppressor of France and the perturbator of Europe." His hope seems to have been that Louis himself might be induced by his favourite's strong influence to dismiss his Minister.

If this ever seemed probable, it was in the early days of 1642. The King and the Cardinal were both ill when they left Paris for Roussillon, the Spanish campaign being in full swing. They travelled separately, the royal party a day in advance; the Cardinal's suite was so large that the same night's lodging was seldom enough for both, and the progress was slow. Leaving Paris in January, they reached Narbonne in the second week of March.

Cinq-Mars had not wasted his time. He had gone so far, they say, with the bored, discontented King, as to suggest not only the Cardinal's disgrace, but his murder. Louis listened, says Aubery, with horror; yet he neither warned the Cardinal nor took any steps to defend him.

He wrote to him indeed in the first days of March, when the weary journey was nearly over, "songés seulement à vostre persone"; but this might naturally refer to Richelieu's health, which was growing worse every day. The King saw no real danger, probably, in the irresponsible chatter of M. le Grand. He was half amused; he was often very impatient of his Minister's domineering temper, and not unwilling to use his favourite as a safety-valve. In that there was nothing new; but all the history shows that the King leaned on the Cardinal's genius, trusted him, if he did not love him, and had too much good sense ever seriously to think of depriving the kingdom of his services.

Cinq-Mars was discouraged, at least as to the violent death he proposed for the Cardinal. Not only was the King a little cold, for his favour was beginning to wane, but Monsieur and the Duc de Bouillon, on whose presence and help he had counted, were prudently careful to keep at a distance. He placed all his hopes, therefore, on the secret treaty with Spain, which was actually brought to him at Narbonne. Fontrailles, disguised as a Capuchin friar, had carried it to Madrid for the signature of Olivarez. In it the King of Spain promised an army of 17,000 men and a large sum of money to Monsieur, the Duc de Bouillon, and Cinq-Mars, who were to command this force under the Emperor and to hold Sedan in his name while Spain invaded France. All the French conquests of the last four years were to be restored, and the work of Richelieu entirely undone. The precious document was sent to Monsieur for his signature, which he, with newly developed caution, was in no hurry to give. Richelieu had offered the command in North Italy to the third chief conspirator, Bouillon. His brother, the Vicomte de Turenne, always of stainless loyalty, was fighting in Roussillon with the Maréchal de la Meilleraye and the young Duc d'Enghien.

The King passed on to the siege of Perpignan, leaving the Cardinal seriously ill at Narbonne. His sufferings at this time, both of mind and body, were very great, and may be traced through the letters which, day by day, he dictated

and sent to M. de Noyers, his Secretary for War, in attendance on the King. Louis was himself far from well, but the Cardinal's constant, eager inquiries, during this enforced separation, betray anxieties beyond the matter of health; for Cinq-Mars was always at his post, and if Richelieu knew nothing yet of the Spanish treaty, he suspected everything as to his enemy's personal designs. The thought of these, and the agony of clinging to that power which, in the last resort, depended on the favour of the King, were worse to the strong spirit than days and nights of pain caused by cruel sores and barbarous remedies.

Early in May he writes from Narbonne: "Unluckily, though the surgeons say I am better, they cannot lift me from one bed to another without extraordinary pain"; and three days later: "As I thought to be entering the haven, a new tempest has driven me far away." A fresh abscess had appeared on his already crippled right arm. "To console me, they talk of playing with knives again, on which I shall find it hard to resolve, having neither strength nor courage enough. I pray God to grant me these, that I may conform to His will." Two days later: "I suffered extraordinary pain last night. . . . They have decided to make an opening in the bend of the arm. But they fear they may cut the vein. I am in the hand of God. I would I had finished my testament, but I cannot do it without you, and you cannot move till Perpignan is taken."

The slight ease given by the operation lasted only a few days, more abscesses forming; and it seems that the Cardinal thought himself a dying man. M. de Noyers having arrived at his pressing summons, Pierre Falconis, notary-royal of the town of Narbonne, was employed to write out that remarkable will of seventeen sheets which shows his mind at its clearest and strongest. Madame d'Aiguillon and M. de Noyers were his executors, and among the witnesses were Cardinal Mazarin and Hardouin de Péréfixe, his chamberlain, afterwards Archbishop of Paris. Falconis attested that "mondit seigneur le Cardinal-Duc" was unable, owing to the state of his right arm, himself to sign his testament.

The end was not yet. The doctors advised a move from the marshes and stagnant lakes of Narbonne to the healthier air of Provence and the Rhône. Any ordinary conveyance was impossible for the Cardinal's pain-racked body. He travelled in his bed, carried by eighteen men in an immense litter hung with crimson and gold. So large, we are told, was the "machine," that gateways had to be widened, doors and windows taken out, walls pulled down, at the many stopping-places on His Eminence's journey. He was overtaken by bad news: the Maréchal de Guiche had been defeated by the Spaniards near Cambray, and for a few days there was great alarm in the north of France, with new outcries against the Cardinal; his enemies were even mad enough to accuse him of having arranged the defeat in order to prove himself still necessary to France. If this absurd report reached him, his already troubled mind was soothed by a letter from the King, brought to him at Arles by M. de Chavigny: "Je finiroy en vous asseurant que quelque faux bruit qu'on fasse courre je vous ayme plus que jamais et qu'il y a trop longtemps que nous sommes ensemble pour nous jamais séparer ce que je veux bien que tout le monde sache."

Richelieu's reply to that letter was to send the King, by the hand of Chavigny, a copy or rough sketch of his brother's secret treaty with Spain.

By what means that copy reached him has been one of the secrets of history. Among many guesses, Michelet favours the story that Queen Anne, aware of the treaty, took this means of making her peace with the Cardinal. But it seems more likely, on the whole, that Richelieu's own spies at the Court of Madrid had made the discovery. In any case it meant for him a final triumph.

At first the King was irresolute. Ill from the heat, he had returned to Narbonne from the camp at Perpignan, leaving the siege to his officers. Though he knew Cinq-Mars to be a traitor, he did not at once arrest him, half hoping, perhaps, that the "pauvre diable" might save his life by escaping over the frontier. Fontrailles had already done so, but Cinq-Mars, proud, foolhardy, confident in his

master's affection, followed him to Narbonne. Urgent letters to the King from the Cardinal decided his fate. When too late he hid himself in a house at Narbonne; the mistress had pity on his curly head, but her hard-hearted husband denounced him; the royal guards seized him and conveyed him to the castle of Montpellier. De Thou, the least guilty of all and the first to be taken, was sent to Tarascon, where Richelieu had already arrived. The Duc de Bouillon, arrested at Casale, was brought back to France and imprisoned at Lyons in the old castle of Pierre-Encise, which in those days still dominated the city.

The King's illness disinclined him to linger in the south, either for the conquest of Roussillon or for the trial of traitors. On the very day of his favourite's arrest he left Narbonne for Fontainebleau, and stopped at Tarascon for an interview with the Cardinal. Both were so ill that Louis was carried on a bed into his Minister's room, and there, side by side, the rulers of France, neither of whom had a year to live, discussed the Spanish treaty and its authors. Louis gave them up, without conditions, to the vengeance of Richelieu. He, assured of the King's eternal faith and affection, forgot bodily pain in mental triumph, and was ready to take up, with all his old energy, the full regal power and authority with which he found himself suddenly invested. This extended not only to the punishment of State criminals, but to the Spanish campaign and the whole government of the south.

It seems that Bouillon and Cinq-Mars had a legal loophole of escape. They appeared in the actual treaty only as "deux seigneurs de qualité," their names, with that of Sedan, being added in a secret memorandum; Monsieur and His Catholic Majesty of Spain were the only two persons openly mentioned. The fate of his fellow-conspirators therefore depended largely on Monsieur; and they, knowing this, may well have despaired.

He was at Blois, "faisant le malade," when the news of the arrest of Cinq-Mars reached him. As a first precaution, he burned the original treaty. Then, finding that

all was known, he sent the Abbé de la Rivière to Richelieu with letters of confession and grovelling entreaties for pardon. Richelieu told the messenger that his master deserved death, and might think himself fortunate if he escaped with confiscation and banishment. He had no longer the saving quality of being heir to the throne of France. He was terribly frightened. The Cardinal, with great show of severity, insisted that he should renounce for ever all "charges and administrations" in the kingdom, and should retire for the present, on a pension, to Annecy in Savoy, after being confronted at Lyons with his captive confederates. This trial the King spared him; but he had to save himself by signing a declaration that Messieurs de Bouillon and de Cinq-Mars were in fact the two "seigneurs de qualité" to whom the Spanish treaty referred.

Cinq-Mars and de Thou were brought to their trial at Lyons. Rumour and gossip seem to have coloured too highly the dramatic situation so often painted and described. According to the story believed by Madame de Motteville, M. de Montglat, and society generally, both prisoners were conveyed by river, the boat in which they travelled being towed by the great barge on which the Cardinal had embarked in his gorgeous litter. As a fact, it was de Thou alone who made part of this spectacle of vindictive triumph, Cinq-Mars being fetched by a troop of horse from Montpellier. The voyage against the swift waters of the Rhône was long and slow. On each bank a squadron of the Cardinal's guards kept pace with the boats. They left Tarascon on August 17, and did not reach Lyons till September 3, when de Thou, with Cinq-Mars, joined the Duc de Bouillon in the castle of Pierre-Encise.

Their trial began immediately; and for Cinq-Mars the verdict was certain, even had not the jury been partly composed of Richelieu's own commissioners, notably that Laubardemont who had for years been a name of terror to his enemies. Chancellor Séguier, with a touch of humanity, tried to save François de Thou: this gallant

gentleman was plainly guiltless of any active conspiracy. But there were old private grudges in his case, and Richelieu's state of mind and body made any hope of mercy vain. Laubardemont, acting for him, brought up an old law of Louis XI. which punished with death those who knew of a plot without revealing it. This law had seldom been carried out in full severity, but its existence was enough to condemn the man who had been a too faithful friend, and de Thou shared Cinq-Mars' sentence. The Duc de Bouillon saved his head by resigning his strong fortress of Sedan to the King—"who much desired it," says Montglat, "because it was situated on the river Meuse, and served as a retreat for all the malcontent."

The sentence, pronounced on September 12, was carried out that same day in the square of the Hôtel de Ville at Lyons. Many writers have described the heroic calmness with which the two young men met their death and the universal pity and mourning throughout society. M. de Montglat expresses the feeling of his order. "Thus died M. le Grand, aged twenty-two years, handsome, well-made, generous, liberal, and having all the parts of an *honnête homme*, had he not been ungrateful to his benefactor, and had he shown more judgment in his conduct. As to M. de Thou, he was beloved of every one: he was indeed a man of great merit, regretted by the whole Court, where many believed that he was condemned without reason."

Three days before the execution Perpignan opened its gates to the French, and Cardinal de Richelieu, who left Lyons for Paris as soon as the trial was over, wrote from his first stage to M. de Chavigny: "These three words are to tell you that Perpignan is in the King's hands and that M. le Grand and M. de Thou are in the other world, where I pray God they may be happy."

Louis XIII., we are told, received the news of his old favourite's death with equal heartlessness—"remembering no more the friendship he had borne him and without any feeling of compassion."

Travelling in his great "machine," the Cardinal made his slow journey chiefly by canals and rivers. October

was advanced when he slept the last night at Fontainebleau, embarked on the Seine, landed in Paris, and was borne on to his retreat at Rueil, the Court being at Saint-Germain.

It was a triumphal return; his enemies were fallen; and from every side news of fresh victories came to greet the dying Minister who had given France her new place among the nations.

CHAPTER XII

1642

The Cardinal's last days—Renewed illness—His death and funeral—His legacies—The feeling in France—The Church of the Sorbonne.

IN the first days after Cardinal de Richelieu's return from the south, few persons, certainly not himself, realized that his career was so near its end. The doctors, however, knew what they were doing when they healed the wounds in his arm; his chief surgeon remonstrated, but to no purpose, for the Cardinal would have it done. "He has dealt himself a mortal blow," the surgeon said to a friend.

For the moment, infirm as he was, he took a new hold on life. During those autumn weeks at Rueil he was eager, imperious, restless, suspicious, ever planning for the future, in case he should survive the King; strangely haughty, irritable, and nervous, insisting that his armed guards should attend him everywhere, even in the royal presence. Louis XIII., himself too ill and depressed to enjoy his hunting as usual, was pestered by Chavigny and de Noyers with messages from the Eminentissime, insisting on the disgrace of four of his best-liked officers—among whom was M. de Troisville, or Tréville, the famous captain of musketeers—whose only crime was that they had formerly been friends of Cinq-Mars, and that Richelieu feared their hatred and their influence. The King resisted long, but at last, by sheer angry obstinacy, the Cardinal gained his point, and the four gentlemen were dismissed from the Court, though not from the army; the King showing "great displeasure, even to shedding of tears."

In November His Eminence moved from Rueil to the Palais-Cardinal, and there, still magnificent though gloomy of spirit and too ill to be actually present, he entertained the Court with the performance of an "heroic comedy" called *Europe*, partly his own, partly the work of Desmarets. Here were celebrated the victories of France over Germany, Spain, and her own internal disloyalties, as well as her triumphs in art, commerce, and luxury. In truth, the piece was a glorification of the ministry of Armand de Richelieu.

It was not long before Nature took her revenge and justified the doctors. "On Friday, November 28, 1642, in the night," says Aubery, "the Cardinal-Duc was attacked by a great pain in his side with fever. On Sunday, the pain and fever having much augmented, it was found necessary to bleed him twice, and the Duchesse d'Aiguillon and the Maréchaux de Brézé and de la Meilleraye decided to sleep at the Palais-Cardinal." On Monday morning the Cardinal was better; but in the afternoon and night he became so much worse, with difficulty of breathing, that the doctors bled him again. On Tuesday the King ordered special prayers in all the Paris churches, and came himself from Saint-Germain to visit his dying Minister. Whether sorry or glad, who knows! At this supreme hour, as all through Richelieu's career, there are contradictory accounts of the relations between the two men. Aubery's dignified narrative shows us a gracious and sympathetic King, handing nourishment to the invalid, listening with sorrowful attention to the last counsels of the statesman who had led him and France so far, and who now, while reminding His Majesty of his past services and recommending his family and friends to his care, was chiefly concerned that Monsieur should have no share, now or ever, in the government, and that Cardinal Mazarin, the fittest of all the present Ministers, should take up the burden which must be laid down. For it was plain to Richelieu himself, as well as to King, friends, and physicians, that he had not many hours to live.

Louis did more than listen to the Cardinal's dying

prayers and counsels; he respected them. But gossips and memoir-writers agree that he left the Palais-Cardinal "fort gai," laughing and joking with the Cardinal's relations and admiring the splendours of the great house which now, by his will, was to become royal property.

When the King was gone, Richelieu asked his physicians how long he had to live. They replied evasively—they could not tell; there was no cause to despair, and so forth. Then he called for M. Chicot, the King's physician, and told him to answer truly, not as doctor, but as friend. Chicot gave him twenty-four hours. "C'est parler, cela!" said Richelieu, and sent for the Curé of Saint-Eustache, his parish church, to receive his confession and to administer the last Sacraments.

"Treat me as the meanest of your parishioners," he said to the priest; and the crowd in his room could hear, through their own sobs, the voice of their master repeating *Pater* and *Credo*, joining in prayers, declaring his faith in God and the Church, answering to the question whether he forgave his enemies: "I have had no enemies but those of the State." It was a bold assertion from the lips of such a man, and the Bishop of Lisieux, standing by, was startled by the confident words. But one may very well imagine that Armand de Richelieu believed it of himself.

On Wednesday the doctors, having bled him again, the pain and fever growing steadily worse, made their bows and retired; they could do no more. A country quack was then allowed to try his skill: many such, probably, haunted the gates of the palace; but this man, Le Fèvre by name, had some friend at Court who admitted him to the sick-room, and the Cardinal did not refuse his remedies. At first they seemed successful. Soothing draughts and opium pills lulled the sharp pain, and when the King, who had remained at the Louvre, paid his second visit in the afternoon, the Cardinal appeared slightly better. The gossips say that Louis departed "less joyful."

A quiet night brought so calm a morning—Thursday, December 4, 1642—that the Cardinal's own people began to rejoice in the hope of his recovery; and if the doctors,

knowing better, shook their heads, M. Le Fèvre had his moment of triumph. But the patient himself was not deceived.

Those to whom he gave audience in the course of that morning—gentlemen sent by the Queen and Monsieur—listened to the words of a dying man. Only on his death-bed assuredly would Richelieu have humbly begged Anne's pardon for any causes of grievance which, "in the course of our lives," she might have had against him.

"A little before noon," says Aubery, "he felt extraordinarily weak, and perceiving thus that his end infallibly drew near, he said, with a tranquil countenance, to the Duchesse d'Aiguillon: 'My niece, I am very ill; I am going to die; I pray you to leave me. Your tenderness affects me. Do not suffer the pain of seeing me die.'"

She, the person he had loved best, left him unwillingly and in tears, and his confessor was instantly called to say the prayers for the dying. A few minutes of unconsciousness, then two heavy sighs, and Cardinal de Richelieu was dead.

He was only fifty-seven; but the worn face, wasted body and whitened hair were those of a much older man. The Parisians came in immense crowds to look on him as he lay in state at the Palais-Cardinal, where the royal guards, even before he was dead, had replaced his own. He lay on a bed of brocade in his magnificent Cardinal's robes and cap, with the ducal coronet and mantle at his feet. The captain of his guards, M. de Bar, sat in deep mourning at his right hand; and on either side, by the light of many tall wax tapers in great silver candlesticks, a double choir of monks intoned psalms perpetually.

On the evening of December 13 "the body of the Cardinal-Duc was transported from his palace to the Church of the Sorbonne on a magnificent car, covered with a great pall of black velvet crossed with white satin and enriched with the arms of His Eminence, embroidered in gold and silver—the six horses which drew it entirely covered with drapery of the same—surrounded by his

TOMB OF CARDINAL DE RICHELIEU

IN THE CHURCH OF THE SORBONNE

pages, each holding a large candle of white wax, preceded and followed by so great a quantity of the same lights, which were carried and borne before the relations, connexions, friends, servants, and officers of the deceased, who were present in coaches, on horseback, and on foot, that the evening of the day on which that funeral took place was brighter than the noon: the wide streets of this city being found too narrow for the innumerable crowds of people by which they were lined, as in the greatest and most august ceremonies."

So far the *Gazette de France*. With every mark, as it seems, of outward respect, the gleaming cavalcade made its way through the darkness of the city. They carried him over the Pont Neuf, where Henry's statue commanded Paris and the Seine, and up the hill, through the old University quarter for which he had done so much, and laid him in the vault he had prepared for himself and his family under the stately new Church of the Sorbonne. His funeral ceremonies extended for weeks, far into the following year, with grand state services at Notre Dame and solemn requiems in all the churches of Paris. A long and flattering epitaph, engraved on copper and fastened to the wall of the crypt where he lay, was meant to keep his fame alive till France herself should be no more. It began: "Icy repose le grand Armand-Jean du Plessis, Cardinal de Richelieu, Duc et Pair de France: Grand en naissance, grand en esprit, grand en sagesse, grand en science, grand en courage, grand en fortune, mais plus grand encore en piété. . . ." After describing the hero's fine deeds and wonderful qualities, his genius, grace, and majesty, the epitaph—said to have been composed by Georges de Scudéry—went on to announce that "il est mort comme il a vécu, grand, invincible, glorieux et pour dernier honneur, pleuré de son Roi; et pour son éternel bonheur, il est mort humblement, chrétiennement et saintement. . . ."

It was not till towards the end of the century that the marble tomb by Girardon was placed above the vault in the Church of the Sorbonne.

By his will, made at Narbonne, the Cardinal confirmed the promised gift he had made to the Crown in 1636 of the Palais-Cardinal, most of his magnificent gold and silver plate, diamonds, and a large sum of money. He divided his lands, châteaux, and other property between his nephew and great-nephews and Madame d'Aiguillon, leaving the lion's share with his name and title, as has been said, to Armand de Vignerot, who was also entrusted with his precious library. Many of his artistic treasures and all his remaining jewellery went to Madame d'Aiguillon. With the most particular care and in the strongest words he guarded against any future dismemberment of the estates he left to his family. Fortunate for him that his fame and honour did not depend on the châteaux, the gardens, the forests, the collections and possessions of every kind which had so long shared his thoughts with France and her glory.

The legacies to his servants and humbler friends showed the Cardinal in his pleasantest light, as a just and generous master. Not one was forgotten, from his chaplains, officers and gentlemen, his secretaries and *le petit* Mulot, secretary's clerk, to cooks, grooms, muleteers, and footmen. The smallest legacy was six years' wages. That he did not forget past benefits was shown by a legacy to a M. de Broye, the necessitous nephew of that Claude Barbin who had helped him to his place in the Ministry in the days of the Maréchal d'Ancre.

"He was extremely regretted," says Montglat, "by his relations, friends, and servants, who were numerous; for he was the best master, relation, or friend that ever was; and provided that he was convinced a man loved him, his fortune was made; for he never forsook those who attached themselves to him." At the same time, he was personally solitary and inaccessible, and after the death of Père Joseph, though surrounded by those whom loyalty or interest kept faithful to him, no man could call himself his intimate friend.

"Il est mort un grand politique"—a great politician is dead: these were the short cold words with which

Louis XIII. honoured the memory of the man who had "raised France to her highest point since Charlemagne; crushed the Huguenot party, which had rebelled against five kings; humbled the House of Austria, which claimed to be the law-giver of Christendom; and established the King's power so firmly, by subduing the princes, that nothing in the kingdom could resist him any more."

As a King, there is no doubt that Louis regretted his great Minister; he had proved over and over again that he knew how to value the statesman who had given him new authority and France new prestige; he had proved it to the bitter cost of those who reckoned on his personal impatience, as a man, of the yoke laid upon him by a tyrannical and worrying tutor. That yoke was now removed; and though the King appeared to be Richelieu's chief mourner, while following his last counsels and carrying out his policy, contemporaries were very sure that in the depths of his soul he was glad to be rid of him.

France, as a whole, drew a long breath of relief and joy. It was not only "les grands du royaume," soon to be flocking back from prison and from exile, Monsieur, appearing once more at Court, the Duc de Vendôme, leaving his refuge in England, who welcomed their freedom from the political terror which had weighed down their gay lives; it was also the people of lower degree, citizens, peasants, who had felt the oppression of Richelieu's heavy taxes. They had paid for his wars by pinching and starvation; for his objects they cared little, the vision of most of them being naturally bounded by their own parish. All through the provinces, in the villages, in the towns, large and small, even in Paris itself, blazing bonfires lit up the winter nights when the Eminentissime lay dead.

"Il est passé, il a plié bagage
Ce Cardinal . . . .
Il est en plomb l'éminent personnage
Qui de nos maux a ri plus de vingt ans . . .
Il est passé . . . ."

That well-known *rondeau* was one of the mildest among the satirical poems full of hatred, violence, and indecency

which circulated in society after the death of him whom they called "le ministre des enfers." And if his countrymen had listened for an echo of their rejoicing, they might have heard it in the "great contentment" of the enemies of France.

Cardinal de Richelieu's noblest monument in Paris is his stately building of the Sorbonne. His resting-place in the crypt of its Church was disturbed in the Revolution, and his bones were scattered, but his embalmed face-mask was preserved by reverent hands and ultimately replaced in his tomb. The Church is no longer used for worship; but Armand de Richelieu still reclines there in marble peace. His eyes are raised to the heaven in which he certainly believed. He is supported in his mortal weakness by Religion, holding the book he wrote, when Bishop of Luçon, in defence of the Catholic Faith; and Science—in the likeness of his beloved niece, Madame d'Aiguillon—lies mourning at his feet.

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